### Every Student Succeeds Act Montana State Plan



#### INTRODUCTION TO THE MONTANA ESSA STATE PLAN

It is the mission and vision of the Montana Office of Public Instruction that all children receive a quality education regardless of their heritage, economic status, or zip code. Our goal is to ensure that every student graduates from high school with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college, career or the military.

The focus of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is to provide students with a quality well-rounded education. Our students need rigorous academic standards in reading and math as well as the opportunity to develop critical thinking and creative problem-solving through the study of arts, health and physical education, science and civics. ESSA will keep Montana students and schools moving forward by strengthening our work to:

- Raise graduation rates
- Improve teaching, learning and student achievement in all of Montana's public schools
- Identify and support schools of greatest need
- Develop students' non-academic skills such as perseverance and adaptability to ensure their continued success after graduation

I want to thank the multiple stakeholders who took the time to partner with the OPI to develop the draft ESSA State Plan. Parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, legislators, community and tribal leaders came together over multiple meetings to share ideas and address concerns about implementing the new federal law. These recommendations demonstrate their commitment to provide the best possible learning environment for students and educators. Montana's plan is stronger because of the voice of our many stakeholders.

This draft of Montana's ESSA plan is a work in progress and as such, some of the sections continue to evolve. We want your feedback on this draft plan so we know it works for Montana's smallest to the largest schools. This plan is open for public comment from November 16<sup>th</sup> through December 16<sup>th</sup>. We welcome your thoughts and ideas.

I believe that Montana's plan will continue our state's legacy of working together as communities dedicated to excellence for Montana's students.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Juneau

Montana Office of Public Instruction Superintendent

# Montana ESSA State Plan Executive Summary November 2016

Superintendent Juneau set a vision for Montana's ESSA State Plan that is focused on providing support for all students to graduate college and career ready. Our work at the OPI is always focused on creating a pathway of success for the next generation so they can reach their hopes and dreams. There is no better economic development tool than making sure our young people receive a quality education so they can secure a good job and are better able to support a family. A well-rounded education that is engaging and relevant to students, both academically and emotionally, is critical to student success. Public education is the great equalizer in American society. The mission of our public schools is to provide a high-quality education to every student that walks through their doors, without regard to their zip code, economic background, ability or heritage. Montana's ESSA State Plan provides a framework to empower educators and give schools the flexibility to create positive life outcomes for every student. It is focused on establishing a system of education which will develop the full educational potential of each person and that equality of educational opportunity is guaranteed to each person of the state. This plan is rooted in the belief that our schools will deliver the opportunity for success for all of our students.

A vital feature of supporting all students includes effective teachers and schools backed by rigorous state standards, effective teacher training and professional development and meaningful engagement with schools with the greatest need.

Multiple stakeholders were fundamental in the work to develop the supports and goals captured within this plan. The plan has a strong stakeholder voice that recognizes local district innovation and increased flexibility in how to measure school performance. School quality and climate was an important focus of conversations for stakeholders – they universally agreed that numbers are not the only way to ascertain a school's effectiveness. Stakeholders want schools to be inviting, safe, to maintain high standards and expectations and to connect closely with their communities. This plan provides both the framework and information needed for schools, districts and communities to take the next steps of developing their local ESSA plans.

In developing **Long-term Goals** OPI staff and stakeholders focused on individual student and cohort proficiency and growth in reading, math and graduation rates. The English Learners stakeholders established aspirational goals for English language proficiency to the year 2020.

Continued engagement with our stakeholders is an essential characteristic of this plan. As such, Consultation and Coordination activities outlined in the plan focus on outreach to Montana educational associations, tribal governments, parents and business leaders to continue the relationships initiated through this process. Coordination efforts also focus on reducing reporting redundancy for school districts as suggested by recommending one improvement plan be developed by a school district to support a more integrated and comprehensive view of how districts are pursuing continuous improvement.

Montana has worked tirelessly to establish rigorous state **Academic Standards** through an extensive process of stakeholder involvement and outreach. This process has resulted in strong standards which,

in turn, supported the development of meaningful **Academic Assessments**. With the availability of interim assessments, this process is fully aligned to determine students' instructional needs.

In developing **Accountability Measures**, the OPI staff and stakeholders focused on more comprehensive ways to assess school support needs and to develop strategies that are individualized and sensitive to the varied cultures of Montana schools. **Support and Improvement** strategies include consideration of all factors that might impact a district. As an example, when a school community is pursuing improvement efforts, the ESSA process should enhance, not detract from, their focus. Stakeholders felt the work being developed under Montana's Schools of Promise is one example of sensitivity to local community culture and one that embeds support within the system instead of being imposed from outside the system.

The **Supporting Excellent Educators** section of the ESSA plan describes a comprehensive and collaborative approach to train and support effective educators. Support of educators within our state has been a long-term and valued relationship between educator preparation programs, educational associations, special education and OPI. Current opportunities using systems of digital distance learning have proven to be effective in bringing training closer to home for educators and has connected educators across our state.

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#### **ESSA Stakeholders Group Members**

Terry Annalora, Miles City, Trustee

Corey Austin, Target Range Elementary, District Superintendent

Laurie Barron, Evergreen Elementary, District Superintendent

Norma Bixby, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Dir N Cheyenne Tribal Education Department

Amanda Blair, Great Falls Public Schools, Special Educator

Tina Blair, West Valley Elementary, Middle School Principal

Mandy Broaddus, OPI, State Indian Education Division Administrator

Bob Connors, Glasgow K-12 Schools, District Superintendent

Jason Cummins, Hardin Elementary, Elementary Principal

Kaide Dodson, Libby K-12 Schools, Curriculum, Special Education, and Federal Programs Director

Pete Donovan, BPE, Executive Director

Marco Ferro, MT-PEC, Member

Collette Getten, Great Falls Public Schools Preschool, Preschool Coordinator

BJ Granbery, OPI, Assistant Superintendent

Reg Hageman, Helena, Health Educator

Mark Halgren, Belgrade Elementary, Curriculum Director

Dana Haring, Kalispell Elementary, Middle School Teacher

Bart Hawkins, North Star HS, District Superintendent

Kevin Kenelty, Ronan Public Schools, High School Principal

Marilyn King, Bozeman Elementary, Deputy Superintendent Instruction

Yvonne Kunz, Helena, Parent

Debra Lamm, House Representative, Representative

Kirk Miller, MT-PEC, Member

Eric Moore, Senate Representative, Senator

Dennis Parman, MT-PEC, Member

Reyna Perez, Hays-Lodge Pole K-12 Schools, Academy Administrator

John Rouse, Browning Public Schools, District Superintendent

Darlene Schottle, BPE, Board Member

Paula Schultz, Anderson Elementary, Special Educator

Siri Smillie, Governor's Office, Education Policy Advisor

Donna Sorensen, Mont School for Deaf Blind, School Superintendent

Carla Swenson, Glasgow K-12 Schools, Elementary Teacher

Greg Trangmoe, Stevensville H S, Trustee

Ruth Uecker, Great Falls Elementary, K-6 Assistant Superintendent

Jule Walker, Plevna K-12 Schools, District Superintendent

Amy Williams, OCHE, Higher Education

#### **English Learners Stakeholders**

Irina Payne, EL Tutor, Great Falls Lisa Jarhaus, Title III Coordinator, Great Falls Michelle Monson, Coordinator, Sidney Bob Connors, Superintendent, Glasgow James Baldwin, Superintendent, Poplar Carla Swenson, teacher, Glasgow Ellen Guetler, Title III Coordinator, Bozeman Marilyn King, Curriculum Director, Bozeman Dave Marzlof, Superintendent, Sun River Valley Matt Genger, Superintendent, Augusta Kathleen Prody, Superintendent, Belt Kathy Wilkinson, Title III Coordinator, Billings Shirley Lindburg, Title III Coordinator, Missoula Sheila Hall, EL Teacher/Coach, Browning Jonna Brandt, Assessment Coordinator, Hellgate Elementary Heather Davis Schmidt, Whitefish Andy Holmlund, Ronan Blakely Hay, Teacher/EL Support, Dillon Elementary Kate Brayko, Education Professor/EL Expert, University of Montana Shawn Smith, Superintendent, Harlem

#### **Long-term Goals**

### How Montana established long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for academic achievement

Student learning is at the heart of the work of all public educators. Montana's educators are committed to continuous progress in students' academic achievement, graduation and well-being. They are constantly evaluating, responding and adjusting to student learning at the classroom level. Local school districts should take the lead on setting goals for their community schools. Measurement of quality at the state level must be rigorous, yet flexible. Maintaining high expectations for all students is non-negotiable, and statewide goals should be reasonable and use data to inform areas that need concentration, focus and attention. Given that, our new online state assessment has its first baseline year, growth of academic performance must be established from that point. Stakeholders expressed a desire to establish aspirational goals that are reasonable and data based. Since Montana only has one year of SBAC data, it is a challenge to determine exactly what goals to set. Stakeholders believe that the following should guide our goal setting:

- Goals should be set based on current performance of a student group or subgroup.
   Therefore, goals should be developed which build on a school's current performance (rather than setting a fixed number goal). These improvement indicators should cover a time period of three years as long term goals.
- 2. Goals should aspire toward a statewide goal which would be the state average of all schools and by subgroup once there is more than one year of performance data.
- 3. Goals should accommodate the varying performance capabilities of low performing and high performing schools.
- 4. Goals should be separately set for each subgroup and for the all student subgroup.
- 5. Goals should be set with as much emphasis as allowable for improvements in the school climate indicator specifically a school improvement rubric.
- 6. Goals could be set for separately for grade bands K through 8 and for high school.

A primary focus is to narrow the achievement gaps between subgroups and to set realistic expectations for all students at each grade span. The OPI proposes to develop long term goals for the first four indicators in the process outlined below. The OPI will develop a statewide average (SWA) for each indicator and compare school performance against the SWA for all students and each subgroup of students. Interim progress will be examined yearly and long term progress will examine outcomes at the end of three years compared to the starting SWA.

- 1. Academic Achievement For schools below the SWA in ELA or math, the goal is an increase toward the SWA. For schools at or above the SWA in ELA or math, the goal is to maintain or improve performance. The same goals would be applied to each subgroup of ten or more students.
- 2. Academic Progress The OPI will develop an SWA for improvement over the most recent two years of data for ELA and math. For schools below the SWA in ELA or math, the goal is an increase toward the SWA. For schools at or above the SWA in ELA or math, the goal is to maintain or improve performance. The same goals would be applied to each subgroup of ten or more students.
- 3. Graduation Rates The OPI will develop a SWA for the four-year cohort graduation rate. For schools below the SWA, the goal is an increase toward the SWA. For schools at or above the SWA, the goal is to maintain or improve performance. The same goals would be applied to each subgroup of ten or more students.
- <u>4.</u> School Quality/Success The OPI will develop a rubric for evaluating school improvement plans, which will include a survey on school climate factors.

5. EL Proficiency Progress – Long term and interim goals for this indicator are described below.

### How Montana established our long term goals and measurements of interim progress for EL proficiency

An advisory group, consisting of stakeholders from across the state met several times about English language proficiency and goals for students entering and exiting based on the WIDA. The advisory group determined the following Growth Criterion-

Starting target is 45% of all ELs will grow in English language proficiency by 0.5 on the composite score (2018)

2019 increase of 2.5%.

2020 increase of 2%

2021 increase 1.5%

Ending target is 51% in 2021.



#### **Consultation and Coordination**

### Public notice, outreach and input for Accountability System, Support to Schools and Educators and All Students

An overall project management implementation team was formed in January 2016. A major focus of this team was to ensure stakeholder engagement was part of all ESSA implementation activities. To that end, the project management team first convened over 70 employees of the MT Office of Public Instruction. Department-wide meetings, leadership council meetings and division meetings all addressed ESSA updates. The OPI website also features regular updates on ESSA implementation work.

The OPI began work on forming an official stakeholders group in February 2016 with a call for members distributed widely to statewide organizations and interest groups. The stakeholders group, with representatives from all required groups, was appointed on March 24, 2016 with its first meeting held in Helena on May 24. Subsequent in-person meetings were held on September 26 and October 24. These meetings were structured to gain comments and recommendations from all the stakeholders. Members of the public attended and provided public comment as well. A fourth stakeholders meeting was added to the original schedule and held November 10.

In addition, OPI gave presentations and received feedback on ESSA and Montana's work on the state plan development at the SAM (School Administrators of Montana) New Administrators meeting on July 19, 2016, the Montana PTA (Parent-Teachers Association) state meeting on September 24, 2016, the MCEL (Montana Conference for Educational Leadership) meeting on October 20-21, and the MEA-MFT (Montana Education Association-Montana Federation of Teachers) Fall Conference on October 21, 2016. OPI staff will also attend monthly MASS (Montana Association of School Superintendents) meetings where they will present information and receive comments on Montana's draft plan for the implementation of ESSA during the public comment period. This statewide effort to continue to reach out and provide information to all schools and districts across Montana and receive feedback will continue. On November 14, a consultation meeting was held with the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE) and tribal leaders. In addition, OPI representatives met with the Higher Education Consortium (HEC) to discuss the development of the plan and receive input.

The Montana State Superintendent also provides monthly updates to all schools and districts. In March of 2016 the Superintendent sent an email statewide, announcing the formation of the ESSA Stakeholder group. In July, she publicized her vision and guiding principles for ESSA implementation in Montana. In September the Superintendent provided an update regarding ESSA implementation in Montana to all schools and districts. The OPI also developed a webpage where all documents and announcements are published so that the ESSA implementation process can be transparent and available. Our state education associations have agreed to assist in the process of sharing information and obtaining feedback.

The draft state plan was posted on the OPI website on November 16, 2016 and simultaneously delivered to Governor Steve Bullock's office for the required 30-day public comment period. A press release on November 16 announced the availability of the draft to the public along with information on how to submit comments.

Posting our draft ESSA Plan is another source of meaningful statewide input. Comments will be read and processed throughout the 30-day period as edits to the draft document continue, with final changes completed between the close of the comment period on December 16 and submission date of December 23.

#### Administration of ESSA programs includes coordination with

- IDEA
- Rehabilitation Act
- Carl Perkins Act
- Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act
- Head Start Act
- Child Care Development Block Grant Act
- Education Sciences Reform Act
- Education Technical Assistance Act
- National Assessment of Education Progress Authorization Act
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

Representatives of these programs have been included either in ESSA planning sessions or other strategic planning sessions in conjunction with the administration of their specific grants. For example, the OPI ESSA state plan work group and accountability work group include representatives from the Division of Special Education and the Division of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (Perkins, WIOA, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act), as well as other divisions of the OPI. Montana's NAEP coordinator is also part of the accountability work group. In the implementation of the federal Preschool Development Grant, OPI has regular team meetings with representatives of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services which administers Head Start and the Child Care Development Block Grant. Additionally, the grant implementation involves collaboration with representatives of the Montana University System, several Tribal Colleges, and The Governor's Best Beginnings Advisory Council (GBAC). The GBAC includes representation from interested constituency groups, governmental agencies, the public at large, child care providers, state and local government, and tribal communities. OPI is also a partner in grants from the Institute of Educational Sciences (IES) and SAMSHA from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as well as School Nutrition grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. OPI representatives from all these grants have participated in ESSA planning efforts.

#### **Challenging State Academic Standards and Assessments**

### Evidence of state adoption of Content Standards, Alternative Achievement Standards, English Language Proficiency Standards

The Board of Public Education is responsible for adopting standards of accreditation for Montana schools. See §20-2-121 and §20-7-101, Montana Code Annotated (MCA) and Article X, sec. 9(3)(a) of the Montana Constitution. Content standards are part of the accreditation standards. The Board of Public Education adopts a schedule, process, and criteria for standards revision to assure Montana citizens that its public schools are providing all children of our great state with a well-rounded education founded on challenging academic standards.

The following list shows the adoption dates for the most recent content standards in each content area:

Arts standards, adopted 2016 Health and Physical Education standards adopted 2016 Science standards adopted 2016

English Language Arts and Literacy standards adopted 2011 Mathematics standards adopted 2011 English Language Proficiency standards adopted 2011

Information Literacy-Library Media standards adopted 2008 Technology standards adopted 2008

Career and Technology Education standards adopted 2000 Social Studies standards adopted 2000 Workplace Competencies standards adopted 2000 World Languages standards adopted 1999

The Board of Public Education adopted English Language Proficiency (ELP) content and performance standards in 2011. These standards are found in the administrative rules of the Board of Public Education, ARM 10.53. 301 through 10.53.311. The ELP content standards cover language arts, mathematics, science and social studies as well as communication for social and instructional purposes within the school setting. The ELP performance standards describe expectations for the following levels of English language proficiency: entering, emerging, developing, expanding, briefing, and reaching.

As a member of the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC), Montana implemented the NCSC alternate achievement standards during the 2014-15 school year. Subsequently, Montana joined the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) consortium. The MSAA is based on the Core Content Connectors (CCCs) which are Alternate Achievement Standards (AAS) developed from the Common Core State Standards. It is intended for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The MSAA replaced CRT-ALT Reading and Math Tests.

In November 2016, the Board of Public Education established a new schedule for revising the content standards. The standards revision process supports Montana's longstanding commitment to equity of

opportunity for all students and ensures that the Montana education system prepares every child to graduate from high school prepared to succeed in college, careers, civic engagement, and lifelong learning.

The Board of Public Education's schedule for revision of standards complies with <u>Administrative Rules of Montana</u> (ARM) 10.53.104, which states:

- 1. Montana's content standards shall be reviewed and revised on a recurring schedule.
- 2. A schedule for review of content standards shall be established as a collaborative process with the Office of Public Instruction and the Board of Public Education with input from representatives of accredited schools. The schedule shall ensure that each program area is reviewed and revised at regular intervals.
- 3. The standards review process shall use context information, guidelines, processes, and procedures facilitated by the Office of Public Instruction with input from representatives of accredited schools.

The Board of Public Education approved the following revision schedule:

Cycle	Content Standards	Research/ Review	Revision	Negotiated Rulemaking	Adoption	Begin Implementation
Cycle I September 2016-July 2019	Social Studies, Career and Technical Education, Digital Literacy and Computer Science	September 2016-April 2017	May- October 2017	November 2017-March 2018	September 2018	July 1, 2019
Cycle II January 2019- July 2021	Mathematics, World Languages	January – April 2019	May – October 2019	November 2019 – March 2020	September 2020	July 1, 2021
Cycle III January 2021-July 2023	English Language Arts/Literacy and English Learners, Health & Physical Education	January – April 2021	May – October 2021	November 2021 – March 2022	September 2022	July 1, 2023
Cycle IV January 2023- July 2025	Arts, Science	January – April 2023	May – October 2023	November 2023 – March 2024	September 2024	July 1, 2025

This schedule may change based on resource availability or other factors.

In accordance with §20-7-101, MCA, the Superintendent of Public Instruction will recommend proposed content standards to the Board of Public Education that are consistent with the processes, guidelines, and considerations outlined by the Board.

#### State assessment for math, reading and science

Montana administers the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment in mathematics and English language arts (ELA)/literacy for grades 3-8. Montana also administers the high school ACT with writing test in grade 11 for accountability purposes.

For science, Montana administers the MontCAS Science Criterion Referenced Test (CRT) in grades 4, 8, and 10.

## Are we using the assessments under the exemption for advanced middle school mathematics? No, since course offerings are a local control decision, OPI does not offer a statewide program for advanced math coursework at the middle school level.

#### State assessments for students with disabilities

Montana administers the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) in mathematics and ELA/Literacy for grades 3-8 and 11. MontCAS Science CRT-Alternate (ALT) is administered in grades 4, 8, and 10.

#### **English Learner assessment**

Montana administers the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) ACCESS for ELLs and the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs as its English language proficiency test. Both of these assessments test English language proficiency in the domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

#### Will we approve any locally-selected nationally recognized high school assessments?

No. Participation in the Smarter Balanced Summative assessment for grades 3-8 and the ACT with Writing for grade 11 is mandatory for all accredited schools. The Science CRT for grades 4, 8, and 10 is also mandatory.

#### Do we provide advanced math coursework for middle school?

Since course offerings are a local control decision, OPI does not offer a statewide program for advanced math coursework at the middle school level. OPI does offer many professional learning opportunities that would support a teacher who plans to teach these classes.

The Montana Digital Academy offers pre-algebra, algebra 1, and geometry. Local schools have the authority to accept any of these as advanced middle school coursework.

#### Incorporating the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in these assessments

To make MontCAS assessments accessible to all students, Montana incorporates the principles of Universal Design into all testing programs.

During the initial stages of the development process, the Bias/Sensitivity committee plays an important role by serving in an advisory capacity. Using specific training materials, committee members evaluate all proposed reading passages for their appropriateness for diverse learners. Subsequently, during item development, both the Item Review Committees and the Bias/Sensitivity Committees provide critical evaluations of all pretest reading passages and test items. This multi-staged review process provides

multiple opportunities to evaluate all reading passages and items for their appropriateness for the assessment. In this way, accessibility emerges as a dimension of primary consideration throughout the item development process.

The National Center for Educational Outcomes (NCEO) has published guidelines for universal design, and Montana has incorporated those principles for both the development of items and in the layout of our test forms. MontCAS has a wide array of accessibility resources which are integrated with classroom teaching and learning.

- Smarter Balanced Summative: Developed to support universal design for learning.
  - Accessibility resources: universal tools, teacher designated supports, and accommodations, all of which include resources for learning for all students.
  - The interim assessments have the same accessibility resources as the summative
  - Smarter Digital Library is designed specifically for universal learning with resources for universal and individualized teaching and learning. New to Smarter are connections within the system to the Digital Library resources.
  - Computer Adaptive summative
- Braille and Large print
  - Produced by American Printing House for the Blind (APH)
  - Translation and multiple round reviews by Braille proofreaders
  - Large-print adjustments including rescaling
- MSAA (Multi State Alternate Assessment )
  - Designed for significantly cognitively delayed students, it includes specific accessibility options, all of which are used in teaching and learning.
  - Employs a tier system so that each student moves toward the same content goals, but the universal design enables students to progress according to individual learning needs. It is a model for classroom universal design.
  - Extensive classroom resources are part of the system.
- CRT and CRT-ALT
  - o Standard and non-standard accommodations.
  - The ALT is a model for classroom universal design
- ACT with Writing
  - ACT approved accommodations
  - State approved accommodations
  - Act Online Preparation (AOP) can be used by students individually or in groups.
- ACCESS for ELLS 2.0 (English Language Proficiency assessment) and Alternate
  - o Accessibility resources for both assessment and instruction
  - This is the second most diverse group of students; therefore, the assessment is based on universal design as are the teaching and learning resources.
  - Extensive classroom resources and professional development are provided to educators.

#### **Ensuring appropriate accommodations**

In order to ensure all students are provided with an equitable testing experience including full participation and an opportunity to demonstrate content knowledge, Montana provides a broad array of standard accommodations that include setting, scheduling, response and presentation. For each statewide assessment, an accessibility manual is provided that details universal design elements,

accessibility features, and accommodations and recommends appropriate uses and populations who would benefit from each accommodation or type of accommodation.

Each statewide assessment has a test administration training that includes modules on accommodations as a requirement of test administrator certification. The Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) requires that each Test Administrator (TA) passes a final quiz with an 80% minimum score prior to being able to access the test administration system. The MSAA has a documentation system for the 5 allowed accommodations.

In addition to test administration training modules, the OPI provides professional development on accommodations via webinars, which are recorded and posted to the OPI website for ease of access. The OPI also prepares additional supports such as FAQs and Quick Facts documents which are posted on the OPI Assessment pages under the appropriate assessment.

The OPI supports proper implementation of accommodations by suggesting that best practice in districts is to form an assessment team that includes a special education expert whose role is to understand the accommodations available for each assessment so that they can provide assistance within the district. The OPI also has an accommodations coordinator consultant who is available to work with districts on accommodations for the Smarter Balanced assessment and provides professional development via webinar and at conferences throughout the year.

#### Providing assessments in other languages for English Learners

Montana will not provide assessments in other languages for English Learners. The use of the Smarter Balanced Summative assessment meets Montana needs according to Montana demographic information. Montana demographics indicate small numbers of students speak a language other than English. In addition, the American Indian population in Montana comprises the majority of EL students are from numerous tribes with minimal or lost written languages. The Blackfeet and Crow languages are the two most prominent oral American Indian languages and most of these students require academic language support rather than a home language assessment. Montana uses the WIDA ELP assessments. Part of the contract is extensive professional development for classroom teachers to support student progression in English language proficiency.

#### **Grants for State Assessments and Related Activities**

The Montana Office of Public Instruction receives approximately \$3.63 million annually from the USED state assessments formula grant. The OPI will use the funding in the following manner:

- \$696,000 for its MOU with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium for use of the digital library, interim assessment and summative assessment items in grades 3-8;
- \$1.5 million for its contract with Measured Progress for the administration of the Smarter Balanced interim and summative assessments;
- \$933,000 for its contract with Measured Progress for the Science CRT;
- \$150,000 for its agreement with WIDA for the administration of the English Language Proficiency assessment; and
- \$353,000 for operating costs and for 5.3 FTE staff positions in the Measurement and Accountability Division and IT Services Division.

#### **Accountability, Support, and Improvement for Schools**

Description of indicators and how they will be measured for all students and subgroups:

#### Academic Achievement

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) data results for math and English language arts will be applied in Grades 3 through 8. ACT scale scores will be used in high school for all 11<sup>th</sup> grade students.

#### **Academic Progress**

The OPI will compare SBAC data from 2016 going forward and compare rate changes from one year to the next. This will apply to SBAC data for grades 3 through 8 and ACT data for 11<sup>th</sup> graders for high school progress results.

#### **Graduation Rates**

The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates will be used and not the extended year rate.

#### **EL Proficiency Progress**

WIDA data will be used to compare current year to previous year for a progress measurement.

#### School Quality/Success

Stakeholders have strongly voiced using school climate as the indicator of school quality, as measured by a school climate survey.

Stakeholders indicated that effective improvement planning is the most important feature supporting student growth.

As such, stakeholders recommended a rubric be established that reflects information contained in a state designed school improvement plan template completed by each school. The rubric will be used to analyze and determine if a school's improvement plan is viable.

#### **Determination of State minimum N**

Montana adopted a minimum N size of 10. A minimum N size of 10 would include more schools in the accountability system (used to identify schools for comprehensive and targeted support every three years). At a minimum number of ten, 582 schools would be included and 92 schools would be excluded because of their small size. This decision was made based on input from the stakeholders group at the September meeting.

#### Calculation and weighting meaningful differentiation and summative ratings

Montana will develop a system of meaningful differentiation based on all indicators in our state accountability system for all students and for each subgroup of students. The indicators will include English learner progress, proficiency on statewide assessments, academic improvement, and graduation rates. These four indicators are important foundational measurements for schools. Each of these indicators will be given "substantial weight" in compliance with the law. Additionally, all four of the aforementioned indicators, in the aggregate, will be given much greater weight than the indicator or indicators adopted in Montana to measure school quality and success. Montana's stakeholders are

advocating that a school quality and success indicator be weighted so that it has as much impact as possible and that this indicator include school climate.

#### **Factoring 95% participation rate**

The law requires that an explanation be provided of how the state will factor in the 95% participation rate requirement into the accountability system.

Stakeholders support identifying any school for targeted support in which the "all students" group or any student subgroups (composed of the minimum N) do not meet the 95% participation rate.

#### Establishing uniform procedures for data averaging

If data averaging becomes necessary, the OPI has a data governance committee that will set business rules around data averaging after seeking input from within the agency and districts and schools.

#### **Identifying Schools for Comprehensive Support**

The OPI will use the accountability indicators to identify the lowest 5% of Title I schools, all high schools with a graduation rate below 67%, and schools identified for targeted support and improvement that have not improved over three years (consistently underperforming subgroups).

Annual determination, using the accountability indicators, will be made for all public schools each year, but the ranking to determine the lowest performing 5% will occur every three years for comprehensive and targeted support. Montana will use SBAC data for 2016 and 2017, EL data, graduation data, and school climate data for Title I schools to develop a rating which will be ordered and ranked.

#### **Identifying Schools for Targeted Support**

Montana will use the same process for identification of subgroups of students in the same manner as it does for identifying schools for Comprehensive Support. This means that a school with any subgroup performing at a level equivalent to schools in the lowest 5% is identified for Targeted Support.

#### **Exit Criteria for Comprehensive Support and Improvement**

- Every three years, the OPI will identify schools for comprehensive support
- After three years, the OPI will review the list of schools and make adjustments based on schools that are no longer in the lowest 5% of Title I Schools and all high schools that improved graduation rates to be above 67%
- Schools no longer in the bottom 5% or high schools that have improved graduation rates to be above 67% will exit comprehensive support

#### **Exit Criteria for Targeted Support**

- Every three years, the OPI will identify schools for targeted support
- After three years, the OPI will review the list of schools and make adjustments based on schools whose subgroup performance exceeds the performance of the lowest 5% of schools
- Schools that have subgroups consistently underperforming will be identified for comprehensive support

#### Supporting and improving low-performing schools

#### Allocation of resources:

- The OPI will set aside the required 7% from Title I Part A
- The OPI will have one continuous improvement plan to support schools to include:

- Data driven analysis with report card and self-assessment
- Data driven goals identified for EL improvement (if applicable), ELA, math, and climate and school quality
- Strategies for achieving goals including professional development, technical assistance, stakeholder involvement, monitoring of progress, and measurable outcomes
- The OPI will analyze improvement on all accountability indicators and for all student subgroups
- The OPI will provide regional trainings to school leadership teams on multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) utilizing the Montana Literacy Plan and the Montana Math Plan.
- The OPI will provide grants to schools to improve MTSS in literacy and math

#### Ascertaining evidence-based interventions

- The OPI will have one continuous improvement plan to support schools identified for comprehensive and targeted support. The OPI will provide guidance in writing their plans and give feedback to ensure evidence-based interventions are being implemented and monitored for effectiveness
  - o Data driven analysis with report card and self-assessment
  - o Data driven goals identified for EL improvement (if applicable), ELA, math, and climate
  - Strategies for achieving goals including identifying professional development, technical assistance, stakeholder involvement, monitoring of progress, and measurable outcomes
- The OPI will use past and current work that shows strong or promising evidence for helping schools improve, including:
  - The practices implemented under the Schools of Promise (SIG funded) initiative, such as wraparound services, student engagement, and school board coaching, have proved to be highly effective and endorsed by stakeholders. The culturally relevant strategies especially have proven highly effective for schools that serve high numbers of American Indian students, and are specifically endorsed by the stakeholders
  - Montana Striving Readers Project strategies (i.e., implementing systems to improve literacy outcomes)
  - American Indian Achievement Task Force recommendations (i.e., 3-person OPI and district team to ensure more cohesive support of districts and less duplication of efforts, and analysis of other effective OPI supports and interventions for low performing schools)
- What Works Clearinghouse
  - Institute of Educational Science Practice Guides will be aligned with the OPI supports and interventions to better support schools and districts in understanding and implementing evidence based interventions

#### Determining the need for more rigorous interventions

- After 3 years, if schools in comprehensive support are not making progress on the accountability indicators for all students and all subgroups, OPI will evaluate additional interventions, which may include:
  - o Intensive support from a three person OPI and district level team
  - More technical assistance from OPI, both programmatic and fiscal
  - More funding from OPI

#### Periodic review of resources allocations

Every three years, the OPI will conduct a comprehensive review to:

- Analyze improvement on all accountability indicators and identify what is working, what is not, and what changes need to be made within the performance management system
- Analyze the continuous improvement plans and identify what is working, what is not, and what changes need to be made within the performance management system
- Analyze funding supports in our fiscal E-Grants system and identify what is working, what is not, and what changes need to be made within the performance management system
- Seek alternative funding mechanisms.



#### **Supporting Excellent Educators**

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) has created an integrated system for ongoing educator improvement providing support and development for beginning educators, evaluation and continuous growth for the advancement of educators, and opportunities to extend excellent professional practice into leadership.

The key to building capacity for the best education for all Montana students is healthy collaboration and coordination of programs among the OPI and partner organizations and associations. Improving effective instructional practice ensures learning, well-being, and success for all students, including low-income and minority learners.

The Montana state plan to support excellent educators includes:

- Educator development, retention, and advancement
- Support educator quality and effectiveness
- Enhance educators' skills to address specific learning needs
- Expand partnerships to ensure all students have equitable access to effective educators.

#### **Montana's Teacher Licensure System**

The Montana educator licensure system as defined in Montana Code Annotated (MCA) and Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) establishes the authority of the superintendent of public instruction to issue educator licenses and the board of public education to adopt procedures for the accreditation review of educator preparation programs. Professional development is defined in ARM 10.55.714 and licensure renewal requirements are outlined in ARM 10.57.215. The 60 renewal units must be a planned and structured experience, of benefit to the licensee's professional development and must be high quality, focused, job-embedded, and sustained.

Montana educator licensure system consists of three core elements:

- Educator licensure http://www.mtrules.org/gateway/ChapterHome.asp?Chapter=10%2E57
- Standards-based preparation programs http://www.mtrules.org/gateway/ChapterHome.asp?Chapter=10%2E58
- Professional growth and improvement http://www.mtrules.org/gateway/RuleNo.asp?RN=10%2E55%2E714

#### **Educator Licensure:**

20-4-101, MCA. System and definitions of teacher and specialist certification student teacher exception. (1) In order to establish a uniform system of quality education and to ensure the maintenance of professional standards, a system of teacher and specialist certification must be established and maintained under the provisions of this title and a person may not be permitted to teach in the public schools of the state until the person has obtained a teacher or specialist certificate or the district has obtained an emergency authorization of employment from the state.

<u>20-4-106, MCA. Classifications of teacher and specialist certificates.</u> (1) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall issue teacher certificates and the board of public education shall adopt teacher certification policies on the basis of the following classifications of teacher certificates:

ARM 10.57.102(6) "Certification" means licensure of an educator/specialist, as issued by the state of Montana, based on completion of a teacher, administrator, or specialist program of an accredited college or university. Certification includes grade level(s), endorsement(s), and classification.

ARM 10.57.102 (8) "Endorsement" means an official indication on a license of the grade level(s), subject area(s), or specialist program area(s) as listed in Subchapter 4 for which the licensee is authorized to practice in Montana accredited schools. Grade levels are:

- (a) Age 3 grade 3 (early childhood);
- (b) K-8 (elementary);
- (c) 4-8 (middle grades);
- (d) 5-12 (secondary, content-specific);
- (e) K-12 (as delineated in ARM 10.57.412); and
- (f) P-12 (special education and school psychologist).

#### **Educator Preparation:**

#### ARM 10.58.102 PROCESS LEADING TO ACCREDITATION OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDERS

- (1) The Board of Public Education shall adopt procedures for the accreditation review of educator preparation providers.
- (2) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall implement the Board of Public Education's procedures by conducting accreditation site reviews.

#### ARM 10.58.103 ACCREDITATION SITE REVIEWS

- (1) Educator preparation providers (EPPs) shall sponsor an accreditation site review every seven years or on an adjusted schedule based upon coordination with national accreditation or upon request of the EPP or the Board of Public Education.
- (2) Joint accreditation site reviews and cooperation with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) will be encouraged.
- (3) Educator preparation providers are required to engage in continuous improvement.

Professional Development and Renewal Requirements:

#### ARM 10.55.714 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- (1) Professional development:
- (a) Shall be aligned with district educational goals and objectives;
- (b) focuses on teachers as central to student learning and includes all other members of the school community;
- (c) Focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement;
- (d) Respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers, principals, and others in the school community;
- (e) reflects proven research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership;
- (f) Enables teachers to develop further experience in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards;
- (g) promotes continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools;
- (h) is ongoing and sustained;
- (i) Is planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate that development;
- (j) requires substantial time and other resources;
- (k) Is driven by a coherent long-term plan; and
- (I) Is evaluated on the impact of professional development on teacher effectiveness and student learning, and the results of this assessment guides subsequent professional development.

#### ARM 10.57.215 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS

- (1) All Montana educator licenses may be renewed with verification of 60 renewal units earned during the five years of validity through August 31 of the year the license expires.
- (3) Renewal activities used to renew all licenses must be a planned and structured experience, of benefit to the licensee's professional development as defined in ARM 10.55.714, an exposure to a new idea or skill or an extension of an existing idea or skill, and in compliance with (4) Activities acceptable to renew licenses.

#### Partners in educator licensure include, but are not limited to:

- Montana Council of Deans of Education
- Montana Council of Deans of Arts and Sciences
- Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
- Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Council to the Board of Public Education

- MEA-MFT
- Educational Associations—Content Discipline Associations, i.e., Mathematics, Social Studies, Arts, School Counseling, Music
- Education Associations—Principal and Other School Leader Associations, i.e., school administrators, small schools, school boards, rural schools, secondary school principals, elementary and middle school principals, Indian education
- Montana citizens

#### **Ensuring Adequate Preparation of Teachers**

The Montana Board of Public Education (BPE) adopts procedures and regulations governing the accreditation of Montana's nine educator preparation providers (EPPs). The BPE establishes and oversees licensure and educator preparation requirements. The Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction is authorized to review each Montana EPP on a seven-year cycle, recommending accreditation status for each provider to the BPE. The Superintendent issues licenses to eligible candidates who are recommended for licensure by an accredited educator preparation provider.

Pursuant to Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) Title 10 Chapter 58 Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards (PEPPS), state approval and accreditation status are required for the nine Montana EPPs before they are authorized to issue recommendations for licensure to the superintendent of public instruction. The BPE establishes rules and the Superintendent of Public Instruction implements these rules to help ensure high quality educator preparation programs to serve the K-12 education system in Montana.

National accreditation for Montana EPPs is voluntary. Of Montana's nine educator preparation providers, four maintain state and national accreditation through the joint accreditation process of the Montana BPE and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The Superintendent of Public Instruction facilitates site reviews of the four joint review processes, as well as conducts site reviews of the five EPPs seeking state approval only. All nine educator preparation providers are required to align to the educator preparation standards and P-12 content standards established by the Montana BPE.

From January 2014 through November 2014, the Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction and the BPE facilitated the seven-year appraisal of ARM Title 10 Chapter 58 Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards (PEPPS). Montana stakeholders participated in the review process. The BPE approved the state superintendent's recommendation of the revisions to the rules at the November 2014 meeting. The PEPPS were effective July 1, 2015. This preschool through graduate school focus will help ensure that Montana education candidates are prepared to implement a standards-based system of continuous improvement aligned with state and national standards, Montana law and requirements, and rigorous Montana P-12 content standards. College and university faculty and administration collaborate with many state partners and are responsive to the needs of Montana P-12 educators.

Montana's accredited educator preparation providers ensure that their graduates are confident and well-equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, dispositions, and resources to be effective

classroom teachers and specialists, i.e., school library media specialists, school counselors, school psychologists, principals, and other school leaders serving all Montana students, including low-income and minority students.

The following three-fold approach ensures that the Montana P-12 education system is guaranteed effective educators from the Montana educator preparation providers. The goals are to:

- Implement evidence based, high-quality educator preparation programs based on common standards that demonstrate positive impact on P-12 student achievement. (ARM 10.58 and CAEP)
- Deliver regional high quality, job-embedded, focused and sustained professional development specifically related to the state model for the evaluation of teachers, principals, superintendents, and other school leaders
- Conduct Montana-focused research studies to identify effective proven strategies to support all learners including low-income and minority learners, such as, rural education and program impact on P-12 student achievement.

The Montana OPI is actively engaged with Montana EPPs in developing, maintaining, and delivering high quality professional development to improve Montana education from early childhood (Preschool through Grade 3) through graduate education. The primary focus of this systemic effort is to deepen the partnership among Preschool to postsecondary P-20 educators to ensure that every "new" educator has access to quality and authentic curriculum, resources, mentors, and learning focused conversations. Stakeholders' training suggestions to increase new educator effectiveness include but are not limited to:

- 1. Differentiation in methodology
- 2. Knowledge and understanding of cultural differences of students (poverty, tribal, or other minorities)
- 3. Knowledge and understanding of Montana standards
- 4. Use of technology to support personalized instruction

#### Partners in ensuring adequate preparation of teachers include, but are not limited to:

- Montana EPPs
- Schools and school districts
- Regional educational support organizations
- Montana's community colleges, tribal colleges, public and private colleges, and universities
- Statewide education organizations and agencies
- National education organizations, agencies and other entities

#### Montana's system for professional growth:

The OPI has an integrated system for ongoing educator improvement designed to provide support and growth for beginning educators, continuing methods for evaluation and improvement of teaching and leading, and opportunities to extend excellent professional practice through leadership.

Montana's professional growth system uses multiple components to support a broad spectrum of educator needs, including:

- A state model for educator evaluation and professional growth, based on an improvement framework using a recurring process of goal-setting, observation, reflection, and selected improvement within formative and summative learning cycles
- Mentoring and induction programs for teachers and educational leaders dedicated to accelerating new teacher development to increase student achievement
- High quality, accessible professional learning opportunities for all levels of teachers and school leaders that is focused, job-embedded, and sustainable

#### Future goals include:

- Strengthening and supporting educator skills to implement the model system for educator evaluation and professional growth through partnerships with schools and regional service organizations,
- Supporting and guiding new teachers and school leaders using focused strategies with demonstrated success in advancing skills and practice, and
- Developing, presenting and supporting quality professional development in a range of delivery modes to meet educators' needs including, but not limited to,
  - Distance learning
  - Face-to-face
  - o Blended
  - Professional learning communities

#### Partners in the Montana system for professional growth include, but not limited to:

- Individual schools
- Larger school districts
- Regional educational support organizations
- Montana EPPs
- Montana's community colleges, tribal colleges, public and private colleges, and universities
- Statewide education organizations and agencies
- National education organizations, and other agencies and entities

#### **Increasing Student Achievement with Rigorous State Standards**

Improving educators' competence in instructional leadership and teaching Montana's rigorous, collegeand career-ready content standards is the foundation for increasing student achievement in the state of Montana.

Montana provides a broad range of support for teachers and school leaders to use, develop, revise, and respond to state standards through:

- A regular system of standards review,
- Growing teacher leadership projects structured around standards-based teaching and assessment,
- Accessible standards-focused professional learning opportunities, and

Alignment of Montana's educator preparation programs with state P-12 content standards.

#### **OPI Programs and Initiatives**

Supporting educators to increase student achievement through rigorous state standards, the ESSA Stakeholders suggested that the OPI coordinate and collaborate across programs including, but not limited to:

- Montana-EPAS,
- Indian Education for All,
- Content Standards and Instruction,
- All Title I efforts,
- Early Learning initiatives (Preschool through Grade 3),
- Programs for English Learners,
- Special Education (IDEA), Multi-tiered Systems of Support, and the Montana Behavioral Initiative,
- Gifted and Talented Education,
- Career and Technical Education Pathways

#### Future goals include:

- Continuing to develop educator leadership, capitalizing on schools with notable leadership in using challenging standards to increase student academic achievement and
- Increasing accessible professional learning opportunities for all teachers, principals, and other school leaders especially those serving rural and high-need schools.

Partners in Montana's system for professional growth leading to increased student achievement through rigorous state standards include, but are not limited to:

- Individual schools,
- Larger school districts,
- Regional educational support organizations,
- Montana EPPs
- Montana's community colleges, tribal colleges, public and private colleges, and universities
- Statewide education organizations and agencies, and
- National education organizations, agencies, and models.

#### Improving the Quality and Effectiveness of Educators

Montana's systems to improve the quality and effectiveness of educators are structured around the concept that all educators can and are responsible to continuously improve their knowledge and skills in order to better meet the needs of their students.

Key components of Montana's system to improve the quality and effectiveness of its educators are:

- Ongoing partnerships with Montana's educator preparation programs,
- A state model system of educator evaluation with structures to fundamentally change educational practice in response to student engagement in the classroom, mentoring and

- induction programs to accelerate new educators' skill levels, and guidance and support to advance capable and professional school leaders,
- A system of broadly accessible (both geographically and financially) high-quality professional development,
- A network of effective educators involved in and extending knowledge through teacher leadership projects, and
- Collaboration and coordination with regional partner organizations to deliver responsive professional development that meets local needs and is high quality, focused, job-embedded, and sustained professional development.

#### Future goals include:

- Strengthening and supporting the implementation of the state model system for educator evaluation and ongoing professional growth through partnerships with schools, regional service organizations and statewide organizations, and
- Developing, presenting, evaluating, and supporting high quality, focused, job-embedded, sustained professional development in a range of delivery modes to meet teachers' and emerging school leaders' needs.

OPI and Partners in working to improve the quality and effectiveness of educators include, but are not limited to:

- Montana Council of Deans of Education
- School Administrators of Montana
- MEA-MFT
- Local school districts and regional educational support organizations
- Montana's Teacher Learning HUB
- Montana Library Association

#### **Increasing the Number of Effective Educators**

The OPI collaborates with key stakeholders to generate plans to help school districts with recruitment and retention of administration and teaching staff, teacher performance appraisals and professional growth, and other issues of improving school climate, instructional quality, and authenticity.

Key stakeholders include School Administrators of Montana (SAM), MEA-MFT, Montana Rural Education Association (MREA), Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA), Montana Small Schools Alliance (MSSA) and Montana Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs). These organizations and associations provide ongoing support, professional learning, technical resources, and access to outreach for Montana education networks.

Partner Initiatives include, but are not limited to:

SAM—Leaders Professional Learning Program (LPLP)
 SAM offers district and school leaders across Montana innovative professional learning opportunities. A combination of the SAM Mentor Program and the SAM 21st Century Leadership Institute (21 CLI), the SAM Leaders Professional Learning Program (LPLP) provides a unique opportunity for district and school leaders one-on-one coaching/mentoring and innovative,

student learning focused, blended professional learning opportunities while working with experienced, highly qualified Montana administrators

http://www.sammt.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=1&ModuleInstanceID=297&ViewID=047E6BE3-6D87-4130-8424-D8E4E9ED6C2A&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=612&PageID=1

#### • Teacher Leadership Competencies

National Teacher Association (MEA-MFT)—The Teacher Leadership Competencies are designed to frame a vision for transformative teacher leadership and express that vision in a set of competencies that teachers can use as a resource for identification, reflection, guidance, and inspiration. The standards address three vital pathways: association, instructional, and policy leadership. http://www.nea.org/home/61346.htm

#### RISE4Montana

This is joint initiative of the MEA-MFT, MREA, MTSBA, SAM, Montana Quality Education Coalition, Montana Association of School Business Officials, Montana Public Education Center, the Phyllis J. Washington College of Education and Human Sciences, and Montana State University's Department of Education. The core purpose of Rise4Montana is to increase the number of available educators interested in working in Montana's public schools while preserving our current standards of quality.

https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/MTSBA/0e64d23d-d17f-46a0-8fd3-8024ab392f9e/UploadedImages/RISE%20elements/MT-PEC%20RISE4Montana.Press%20Release.5.3.2016.pdf

#### National Board Certification (NBC)

NBC is a voluntary advanced professional certification for P-12 educators that identifies teacher expertise through a performance-based, peer-reviewed assessment. http://www.nbpts.org/national-board-certification

Recruiting and Retaining Outstanding Teachers for Eastern Montana's Rural Communities
 The
 "Rural Practicum Experience "expands the MSU Teacher Education Program's clinical
 partnerships into Eastern Montana rural schools by taking cohorts of practicum students to the
 Bakken area to do their practicum work in those rural schools.

#### Turnaround School Leaders

The Rocky Mountain College Master of Educational Leadership Program's grant "Developing and Supporting Turnaround School Leaders" provides professional development, technology, and support to leaders in seven high-needs districts as identified by the OPI. The overarching goals of this program are to recruit, train, place, support, and retain turnaround leaders in School Improvement Grant (SIG) high-need schools in Montana. www.rmc.edu

OPI programs and initiatives supporting the increase in the number of effective educators

#### • School Climate Program

The OPI school climate program, a grant from the United States Department of Education, is designed to increase of evidence-based practices for implementing a Multi-Tiered System of

Supports (MTSS) in Montana schools. The MTSS model leads to improved school climate, actively supports teachers and school leaders, and improves academic outcomes for students. All of these factors improve recruitment and retention of qualified educators.

#### Schools of Promise

The OPI's Title I, Part A, School Support System provides ongoing site-based support to help teachers and administrators in schools to improve their practices and upgrade skills to ensure student learning. The system, in partnership with the Schools of Promise Initiative, provides training for principals and other school leaders. This training assists the school leaders to become more effective instructional leaders and to better assist teaching staff to meet the challenges they face in improving instruction for high-need students.

#### Teacher Learning Hub

The Montana Teacher Learning Hub is a learning network on the Moodle platform dedicated to providing free, high quality professional learning for all K-12 educators across Montana. Over the past three years, the MEA-MFT, MT Digital Academy, and OPI partnership project team has worked to develop over 160 online modules that focus on instructional strategies and student learning supports. The Hub has over 4,000 registered users. The Hub minimizes the time teachers spend away from their classrooms to attend training, as well as save school districts money by providing evidenced-based professional learning that does not require that teachers travel.

http://learninghub.mrooms.net/

#### Montana Higher Education Consortium (HEC)

HEC is a unique community of practice that has brought together general and special education faculty members from all teacher training programs in the State of Montana. The HEC has met twice a year for the past fifteen years to discuss critical issues and share ideas relating to teacher training programs in Montana. The meetings have created a strong partnership and collaboration between faculty members at the teacher training programs. The universities and colleges in Montana benefit from the information they receive from the Montana Office of Public Instruction. The HEC has connected and collaborated with two Office of Special Education Program (OESP) national centers: 1) International Resource Information System (IRIS) Center and 2) Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center.

http://www.taese.org/cms/index.php/majorinitiatives/2014-01-14-03-54-22 http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/

https://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/

#### • Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The OPI is responsible for providing guidance and support to every LEA with the implementation of the Child Find requirements. The OPI monitors district performance and uses the data available to target the professional development and technical assistance activities funded by the IDEA. Examples of activities that improve the LEAs ability to support all students include:

 The Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI) provides training and technical assistance to LEAs in implementing a system of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports to improve school climate and parent and family involvement; and, to reduce disciplinary removals of students. http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/MBI/SRS.html

- Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) uses five regional councils to develop ongoing professional development based on the needs of the LEAs in the region. In addition to conducting a needs survey, each region examines data regarding student performance and outcomes to more effectively target the professional development offered. <a href="http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/CSPD/">http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/CSPD/</a>
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) provides training and ongoing support to LEAs in developing and implementing a multi-tiered framework at the school level. http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/TitlePrgms/ssos.html
- Teacher Leadership Academies and Activities to Support All Students
   The Office of Public Instruction, Montana University System (MUS), and other statewide partners are building effective professional learning programs to support teacher leaders across the state. These leaders help guide and support local and regional teachers in developing and deepening a shared understanding of content knowledge and effective instructional strategies that engage and promote student learning and academic success.

#### **Providing Low-Income and Minority Students with Effective Educators**

The OPI in collaboration and coordination with individual school districts will examine data from the state system of support and other sources to develop and provide professional development aimed at specific learning needs of students, student engagement, school climate, leadership, and other school needs required for effective schools and learning.

The OPI actively assists all school districts through access to a broad range of professional development strategies. Schools use student achievement and other data from the accountability system to identify specific improvement strategies to more effectively teach low-income and minority students.

#### Future goals include:

- Expanding the abilities and skills of educators working with low-income and minority students to
  their unique learning needs through high quality, focused, job-embedded, sustained
  professional development based on experience and research into strategies that are integrated,
  effective, and produce results for student learning and well-being. Strategies to expand abilities
  and skills of current educators include, but are not limited to:
  - o Implementing a single integrated school plan beginning with needs assessment and goal setting to clearly focus on school improvement
  - Providing coaching on goal-setting and building an effective plan for professional development for schools identified for targeted and comprehensive assistance
  - Scaling up of the highest quality, targeted, job-embedded, sustained professional development resources that have proven to be effective in ensuring success for low income and minority students

- Building digital literacy, technology skills, and resources for educators in schools that serve low income and minority students
- Strengthening networks between and among OPI programs and divisions that increase both capacity and effectiveness of professional development in effective teaching of low income and minority students
- Ensuring that well-qualified, effective educators who understand and are highly capable of teaching low-income and minority students are recruited by and supported in serving schools with higher numbers of low-income and minority students. Strategies to connect effective educators with schools with high populations of low-income and minority students include, but are not limited to:
  - Growing and strengthening Montana's preschool through graduate education (P-20) network to develop a regional system of support for high-need schools with critical teaching and school leadership shortages
  - Identifying and prioritizing best practice to recruit and retain educators to serve in highneeds schools
  - Strengthening networks between and among OPI programs and divisions that increase both capacity and effectiveness of professional development in effective teaching of low income minority students

### <u>Partners in providing low-income and minority students with effective educators include, but are not limited to:</u>

- Cross-agency collaboration and coordination at the OPI
- School districts
- Professional Educational Associations and Organizations
- Regional educational service organizations.

#### Skills to Address Specific Learning Needs

Montana's many programs and initiatives provide a broad range of professional development for teachers, principals, or other school leaders that are relevant, timely, and address the learning needs of all students, including, but not limited to:

- Low-income students,
- Lowest-achieving students,
- Students whose schools and homes are rural, remote, and/or isolated,
- English learners,
- Children with disabilities,
- Children and youth in foster care,
- Migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school,
- Homeless children and youths,
- Neglected, delinquent, and at-risk children identified under Title I, Part D of the ESEA,
- Immigrant children and youth,

- Students in LEAs eligible for grants under the Rural and Low-Income School Program American Indian and Alaska Native students,
- Students with low literacy levels, and
- High ability/high potential students (gifted and talented).

The OPI works with school leaders and teachers to strengthen current systems for serving students in all identified subgroups through processes including, but not limited to:

- Identification (with multiple entry points),
- Assessment or screening,
- Timely appropriate intervention,
- Coordinated and embedded delivery systems,
- Standards for meaningful progress,
- Continued assessment, where appropriate, and
- Requirements for program exit, where appropriate.

#### Future goals include:

- Implementation of one continuous improvement plan for schools identified for comprehensive and targeted support in writing their plans and feedback to ensure evidence-based interventions are implemented and monitored for effectiveness
  - o Data driven analysis with report card and self-assessment
  - o Data driven goals identified for ELA, math, and climate
  - Strategies for achieving goals including identifying professional development, technical assistance, stakeholder involvement, monitoring of progress, and measurable outcomes
- The OPI will use past and current work that shows strong or promising evidence for helping schools improve, such as:
  - State Improvement Grants (i.e., school board coaches)
  - Montana Striving Readers Project (i.e., implementing systems to improve literacy outcomes)
  - American Indian Achievement Task Force (i.e., 3-person OPI and district team to ensure more cohesive support of districts and less duplication of efforts, and analysis of other effective OPI supports and interventions for low performing schools)
  - English learners (i.e., face-to-face and online workshops and resources)
  - Title I, Part D 1 and 2 programs and initiatives implementing support to educators (i.e., Homeless, foster care, neglected and delinquent, at risk)
- The OPI's strategic approach to helping educators meet the needs of all student subgroups as well as serving the needs of all students requires an inclusive model
  - Create a model framework of support for each student subgroup that integrates multiple OPI programs and projects,
  - For all schools, use regional networks, distance learning systems, and blended learning to increase the reach, depth, and integration of professional development for educators serving students in all identified subgroups,

- Frame all professional development with requirements that it be high quality, focused, job-embedded, and sustained,
- Focus on support for teachers and school leaders in high-need schools, but open professional development to all educators,
- Build capacity to serve a broad range of school district needs through using a regional delivery and/or mentoring approach when appropriate.

#### What Works Clearinghouse

 Institute of Educational Science Practice Guides will be aligned with the OPI supports and interventions to better support schools and districts in understanding and implementing evidence based intervention

#### Partners in addressing the needs of students in identified subgroups include, but are not limited to:

- Regional educational service organizations,
- Statewide organizations advocating for students in particular subgroups,
- Montana Behavioral Initiative,
- Montana American Indian Achievement Task Force,
- Montana Department of Corrections,
- Programs that target improving achievement for students whose skills are well behind grade level expectations,
- English Learners programs,
- Title I programs,
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP),
- Gifted and Talented Education programs and resources.

#### Montana's Support of a Statewide Evaluation System

Montanans are fiercely devoted to local control of education with 410 public school districts serving 145,316 students. School district policy, procedures, and curriculum are determined by local school boards. The Montana Educator Performance Appraisal System (Montana-EPAS) is the state model for the evaluation of teachers, principals, superintendents, and other school leaders. Each district may adapt, adopt, or align procedures to meet the requirements of the Board of Public Education (BPE), Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 10.55.701(4).

http://www.mtrules.org/gateway/RuleNo.asp?RN=10%2E55%2E701

Montana-EPAS, a standards-based evaluation system, is designed to encourage professional learning through a continuum of career development. Montana-EPAS provides useable tools for school districts to implement the state model or use a common framework to align local systems of evaluation to the state standards. Improving professional practice of educators ensures student learning, well-being, and success.

State funding to support the systemic implementation of the Montana-EPAS is limited. The OPI, in collaboration with regional partners, has developed a fee-for-service model for delivering high quality Montana-EPAS professional development to school districts across the state. Regional delivery of

workshops, work sessions, and technical assistance presented by a cadre of skilled facilitators help school districts develop and implement the following:

- A process for review of current evaluation/appraisal practices
- Goal-setting
- Learning-focused professional conversations
- Observation skills
- Formative feedback
- Summative reporting

#### Future goals include:

Building capacity and expanding a coordinated regional network of support for Montana-EPAS, includes, but is not limited to,

- Facilitate annual workshops and calibrations for each level of the evaluation system: teachers and specialists, principals, and superintendents
- Develop and disseminate state models of induction and mentoring programs in consultation with district personnel, colleges and universities, and professional organizations
- Coordinate and collaborate across educational professional development and support service and regional delivery entities

Partners in the work of supporting a comprehensive statewide evaluation system, include, but are not limited to:

- Regional Education Service Areas
- School Administrators of Montana
- Montana's colleges and universities
- Montana Small School Alliance
- Montana School Boards Association
- MEA-MFT
- Montana Rural Education Association
- Teaching, Learning, and Leading Collaborative (LINK)
- Special Education's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development,
- Title
- Indian Education for All

#### **Supporting Educator Preparation Programs**

Future goals include:

• Continuing to develop and align the tenets of the Montana state model for the evaluation of teachers, principals, and superintendents into the pre-service curriculum, preparing graduates to implement a professional growth system in Montana school districts.

#### **Equitable Access to Effective Educators**

Montana will show whether low-income and minority students enrolled in schools that receive funds under Title I, Part A are taught at disproportionate rates by out-of-field or inexperienced teachers compared to non-low-income and non-minority students enrolled in schools not receiving funds under Title I, Part A.

#### Montana's definitions for the following terms

Key Terms	Definition
Ineffective teacher	Montana has not defined the term "ineffective
	teacher." In 2004 and 2013 to determine "quality,"
	Montana used highly-qualified teacher (HQT) status
	based on NCLB's requirements of HQT.
Out-of-field teacher	Montana-licensed teachers teaching outside their
	endorsed subject areas.
Inexperienced teacher	Montana teachers with less than one year of teaching
	experience.
Low-income student	The determination of poverty is based on the
	percentage of students at a school who are eligible for
	free or reduced price lunches through the National
	School Lunch Program. For the purposes of this report,
	schools were credited with 100 percent eligibility for
	free lunch.
Minority student	Students were classified as minorities if they identified
	as anything other than "White," not Hispanic.
	Race/ethnicity categories are now:
	1. Hispanic
	2. American Indian/Alaska Native
	3. Asian
	4. Black/African-American
	5. White
	6. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
	7. Multiracial/Two or More Races
Rural Locales/Rural/Remote	Montana is one of only three states characterized as
	High Percent of Overall Rurality and Very
	Isolated/Remote Rural Communities The rural/isolated
	nature and large geographic area of Montana are
	primary elements of influence on inexperienced,
	unqualified, or out-of-field teachers in public schools.

In 2005 and 2013 Montana compared student access to highly-qualified teachers in the highest- and lowest-poverty schools, as well as the highest- and lowest-minority schools, and identified the following equity gaps.

#### Equity Gap 1: Disparity of Access to HQTs in High-Poverty Secondary Schools

In 2005 the percentage of secondary students taught by a HQT was 2.1 percent higher in low-poverty schools compared to high-poverty schools. By 2013, that gap closed to 1.5 percent.

**Equity Gap 2:** Discrepancy of Equitable Access to HQTs between Secondary and Elementary students by High- and Low-Poverty and High- and Low-Minority Quartiles for Secondary and Elementary students

In 2005 the percentage of elementary students in high-poverty schools taught by a HQT was 2 percentage points higher than secondary students in high-poverty schools. In 2013 the gap decreased with the elementary students in high-poverty schools taught by a HQT was 1.6 percentage points greater than the secondary students in high-poverty schools.

#### Equity Gap 3: Rural/Remote Nature of Montana Schools

Rural schools form the overwhelming percentage of all schools. Seventy-five percent of Montana schools are classified as rural.

#### Future goals to advance the work of closing the equity gaps include:

- Guaranteeing all students greater access to effective educators in every Montana district, school, and classroom
- Increasing collaborative efforts to continue improvements in teacher preparation outreach, recruitment, retention, and online support to teachers who teach in rural, remote, and isolated regions of the state and in schools with low-income and minority students.

# **Determining Disproportionality of Students Taught in Schools**

The OPI will use 2013 and 2015 data to illustrate whether low-income and minority students enrolled in schools receiving Title I, Part A funds are taught at disproportionate rates by out-of-field or inexperienced teachers compared to non-low-income and non-minority students enrolled in schools not receiving Title I, Part A. The OPI will calculate and report student-level data on a statewide basis.

#### **Public Reporting**

- Beginning spring of 2018, the OPI will publish and annually update:
  - Rates of disproportionalities calculated
  - Percentage of teachers categorized as ineffective
  - Percentage of teachers categorized as out-of-field teachers
  - Percentage of teachers categorized as inexperienced
- The rates will be reported as follows:
  - o Rate at which students are taught by an out-of-field teacher
    - low-income students enrolled in schools receiving funds under Title I, Part, A
    - non-low-income students enrolled in schools not receiving funds under Title I, Part A
    - minority students enrolled in schools receiving funds under Title I, Part A
    - non-minority students in schools not receiving funds under Title I, Part A

- o Rate at which students are taught by an inexperienced teacher
  - low-income students enrolled in schools receiving funds under Title I, Part, A
  - non-low-income students enrolled in schools not receiving funds under Title I, Part A
  - minority students enrolled in schools receiving funds under Title I, Part A
  - non-minority students in schools not receiving funds under Title I, Part A

## **Identifying Root Causes of the Determining Factors**

The OPI will use the 2015 process to identify root causes of determining factors:

- 1. Identifying relevant, available, and updated data
- 2. Analyzing data and identifying equity gaps
- 3. Identifying root causes
- 4. Aligning Strategies to root causes

In 2015 Montana focused primarily on the assignments of Highly Qualified Teachers (HQTs) teaching core academic subject classes. In addition to the HQT assignments across all quartiles, the 2015 state plan compared data of high- and low-poverty and high- and low-minority schools and students. While the percentages are statistically low, the data revealed unacceptable equity gaps that affect high-poverty and high-minority schools and students.

Montana OPI examined HQT data in schools across poverty and minority quartiles, the percentage of access to HQTs of poor and minority students across all quartiles, and the Locale Codes and Locale Urban Codes of high-poverty and high-minority schools to identify possible root causes of Montana equity gaps. The OPI team targeted the following root causes that appear to be obstacles of closing the equity gaps.

Rural/Remote/Isolated Nature of Montana

Rural schools form the overwhelming percentage of all schools. Seventy-five percent of Montana schools are classified as rural. High-poverty schools are more likely to be remote and/or rural.

The rurality and high poverty can often lead to turbulent systems where stable administration and teaching staff are difficult to attain or maintain. Such circumstances, for example, may lead to late recruitment for key positions within the district, while other more stable districts complete the hiring process earlier.

Pay, benefits, working conditions, and cultural issues contribute to the challenges of recruiting, hiring, and retaining high quality secondary school teachers. Larger districts have better compensation and benefits packages. Teachers in small rural schools often are isolated with a limited support system. Mentoring can be difficult when there are so few staff in rural schools. Often "good teachers" move on because they are experienced and qualified to teach at a larger, better paying school.

Often difficulty in locating housing and other important life considerations, e.g., access to medical care, shopping, and finding personal necessities, adds problems of hiring and retaining effective educators. The isolation is often difficult for staff that are not from these communities.

There are many stories of staff being hired, moving to the community, and then promptly leaving or lasting part of the school year before leaving.

# Extreme Poverty/Minority Schools

In 2005 the percentage of secondary students taught by a HQT was 2.1 percent higher in low-poverty schools compared to high-poverty schools. By 2013, that gap closed to 1.5 percent.

In 2005 the percentage of elementary students in high-poverty schools taught by a HQT was 2 percentage points higher than secondary students in high-poverty schools. In 2013 the gap decreased with the elementary students in high-poverty schools taught by a HQT was 1.6 percentage points greater than the secondary students in high-poverty schools.

High-minority schools are more prevalent in the city categories than expected. The city schools are the largest schools in the "High Minority" quartile. Also, all of the high-poverty schools in the city locale codes are high-minority schools, but there are more high-minority schools in the city locale that are not high poverty.

#### Future Goals for Addressing Disproportionality:

#### Recruitment, Hiring, Development, and Retention of Qualified Educators

The OPI relies on the support of key stakeholders to generate plans to help school districts with recruitment and retention of administration and teaching staff, teacher performance appraisals and professional growth, and other issues of improving school climate, instructional quality, and authenticity. Key stakeholders include Montana Small Schools Association, School Administrators of Montana, Montana School Boards Association, MEA-MFT, Montana Rural Education Association, Montana Professional Education Center, and Montana Quality Education Collaborative. These organizations provide ongoing support, professional learning, technical resources, and access to outreach for Montana education networks.

# • Developing and Supporting Turnaround School Leaders

The Rocky Mountain College Master of Educational Leadership Program's Turnaround School Leaders grant provides professional development, technology, and support to leaders in seven high-needs districts as identified by the OPI. The overarching goals of the grant are to recruit, train, place, support, and retain turnaround leaders in School Improvement Grant (SIG) local education agencies in Montana.

#### Regional Teacher Sharing

Sharing the services of properly licensed and endorsed teachers for schools with hard-to-fill positions in core academic subjects among districts ensure equity in teacher quality among schools. The OPI is working with the Montana Association of School Superintendents, MEA-MFT, School Administrators of Montana, Montana School Boards Association, Montana Small Schools Alliance, Montana Rural Education Association, Tribal Education Departments and Councils, Special Education Cooperatives,

and the Regional Education Service Areas to expand a regional system to equitably distribute experienced, in-field, and effective teachers.

http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/Index.html?gpm=1\_12#gpm1\_11

# • Educator Talent Development Strategies Program

As a strategy to develop educator talent, in March 2013, the Board of Public Education (BPE) adopted the superintendent's recommendation to expand eligibility for the student loan forgiveness program to elementary teachers in rural, high-poverty areas. Elementary school teachers in a special education cooperative or an impacted school with a total score of 15 or higher also are eligible for the loan forgiveness program. The Educator Talent Development Strategies Program offers incentives for teachers to take teaching positions in elementary, middle grade, and high schools in high-poverty areas. The program requires teachers remain in the program for four years to qualify for loan forgiveness.

# • <u>Title I School Support System</u>

This system provides ongoing support to help teachers and administrators in schools identified in need of comprehensive or targeted assistance to improve their practices and upgrade skills. The system, in partnership with the Schools of Promise Initiative, provides training for administrators in instructional leadership. This training assists the administrators to become more effective instructional leaders and to better assist teaching staff to meet the challenges they face in improving instruction for high-need students. http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/TitlePrgms/ssos.html

#### • School Climate Program

The OPI obtained a school climate grant from the ED. The focus of this grant is to increase use of evidence-based practices for implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) in Montana schools. The MTSS model leads to improved school climate, actively supported teachers, and improved academic outcomes for students. All of these factors improve recruitment and retention of qualified teachers.

# • Indian Education Student Achievement

The OPI supports educators across the state as they work in schools that serve Montana's largest subgroup, American Indians. Professional development, resources (lesson plans, curriculum guides, etc.), and technical assistance are provided at no cost to local schools or educators to assist them in this work. In addition, local school districts receive state level funding that is targeted toward closing the achievement gap.

#### Montana Striving Readers Project

This project assists high-need schools with intensive professional development for teachers. This high-quality, intensive development for teachers and administrators gives them opportunities to become some of the best prepared educators in the state with the ability to close the achievement gaps that have existed for their students in the past.

#### • Schools of Promise Initiative

Since 2011, the OPI has used the federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) opportunity to enter into comprehensive school improvement partnerships with some of the state's lowest performing schools, known as the "Schools of Promise" initiative. These schools, identified as "persistently lowest achieving," are all located on Indian reservations and face dire circumstances related to poverty and extreme isolation. Through a unique, collaborative partnership, the OPI places three to four full-time staff members in each location that work alongside school staff to create greater system stability, stronger infrastructure, and better overall student outcomes. In particular, this work helps school leaders (boards of trustees and administrators) recruit, retain, and support strong educators who will impact the learning environment.

#### Montana New Teacher Induction Project (MNTIP)

The purpose of the MNTIP is to establish a revitalized induction and mentoring network for districts to support their efforts to meet the ARM 10.55.701(5)(b) by establishing induction and mentoring programs in each school district. To this end, the OPI is partnering with The New Teacher Center (NTC) to help accelerate new teacher professional growth and impact student achievement through design and implementation of high-quality teacher induction and mentoring programs. The OPI and the NTC developed and are delivering statewide induction institutes and instructional mentoring workshops. This professional development program is designed for induction program leadership teams that are about to implement a new induction program or for teams looking to enhance current programs.

#### **Foundational and Structural Support for All Schools**

Montana Educator Performance Appraisal System (Montana-EPAS)
 In September 2013, the BPE approved ARM Title 10. Chapter 55 Sta

In September 2013, the BPE approved ARM Title 10, Chapter 55 Standards of Accreditation. Included in these rules are requirements for local districts to renew teacher and school leader evaluation systems. The revised standards are based on the foundation that high-quality, high-performing teachers and school leaders are critical to ensure student learning. An evaluation system based in professional growth for all educators will help to foster learning environments that meet the needs of all students. The OPI, in consultation with stakeholders, developed a state model for the evaluation of teachers and school leaders: the Montana Educator Performance Appraisal System (MT-EPAS). This standards-based evaluation system is designed to encourage professional learning through a continuum of career development. The MT-EPAS was launched in August 2013. Montana school districts are encouraged to adopt or adapt the state model, or to review and revise the local evaluation system to meet state standards. The OPI provides statewide and regional workshops to assist school leaders with the implementation of the revised standards.

#### • Montana Preschool Development

This project is jointly implemented by the Governor's Office, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), and the Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS.) http://www2.ed.gov/programs/preschooldevelopmentgrants/index.html

#### Regional Education Service Areas (RESA)

The mission of the five RESAs is to establish a systemic approach that identifies regional needs and provides support to local school districts through communication, direct interaction, follow-up, and ongoing partnership. The RESA directors work collaboratively with the OPI to deliver state initiatives, projects, and programs to Montana teachers and administrators in the regions. The RESA directors work with the OPI in the following areas that are directly connected to closing the identified equity gaps: Montana-EPAS, New Teacher Induction Project, Gifted and Talented Education, and Indian Education grant support.

#### Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD)

The OPI operates a CSPD throughout Montana. This system is based in five regions responsive to the professional development and technical assistance needs of schools in each region. Through this system, the OPI makes available high-quality, professional development to every teacher in the state.

# • Montana Higher Education Consortium (HEC)

HEC is a unique community of practice that has brought together general and special education faculty members from all teacher training programs in the State of Montana. The HEC has met twice a year for the past fifteen years to discuss critical issues and share ideas relating to teacher training programs in Montana. The meetings have created a strong partnership and collaboration between faculty members at the teacher training programs. The universities and colleges in Montana benefit from the information they receive from the Montana Office of Public Instruction. The HEC has connected and collaborated with two Office of Special Education Program (OESP) national centers: 1) International Resource Information System (IRIS) Center and 2) Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center.

http://www.taese.org/cms/index.php/majorinitiatives/2014-01-14-03-54-22

http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/

https://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/

# **Supporting All Students**

In order to address both the academic and non-academic needs of Montana students, the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) encourages Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to adopt a whole-child philosophy to ensure that all students receive a fair, equitable, and high quality education. The OPI provides support to LEAs in using data-driven approaches to identify and address the needs of every student, as well as works to assist LEAs in providing equitable access to a broad well-rounded education aimed at developing our children into college and career ready young adults. This work is rooted in our rigorous college and career readiness standards and is based on an integrated multi-tiered model that includes social and emotional well-being, health and safety, and family and community factors in addition to the traditional academic and behavioral concerns typically used to identify a child's needs.

To implement these supports, the OPI has put in place a Leadership Council to both align and target the agency resources to most effectively support the LEAs in serving every student's needs. The council is comprised of leaders from every division in the agency, as well as the Superintendent's leadership team. By employing this leadership collaborative the OPI is able to more effectively make decisions regarding the types and intensity of support that will be made available to each LEA in the state to support student learning and success. This effort has resulted in strong cross-agency collaboration and has greatly reduced the duplication of supports being provided to LEAs. By aligning our initiatives and work, the agency has become more efficient in addressing priorities as well as improving budgetary decisions. The result is that the OPI's key initiatives and its collaborative use of resources has a much broader impact in supporting every child's success. The funds available under Title IV will be used to strengthen the evidence-based supports already in place rather than in constructing or using duplicative support systems in each division.

The sections that follow provide an overview of the strategies currently employed by OPI and, with the input from our stakeholders, those that are anticipated to be provided under this State Plan in each of the following critical areas.

#### P-12 Continuum

Montana is dedicated to ensuring the state's education system prepares every child to graduate from high school ready for college and careers. Montana's goal is to provide equitable access to educational opportunity through a continuum, including transitions from grade to grade, of every student's educational experience from preschool through grade 12 to postsecondary education and careers.

#### **Key Initiatives to Support the P-12 Continuum**

- Montana Preschool Development
   This project is jointly implemented by the Governor's Office, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), and the Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS.)
   http://www2.ed.gov/programs/preschooldevelopmentgrants/index.html
- Montana Early Childhood Guiding Documents and Standards
   The early years of a child's life—from birth to age eight—are critically important for learning and development. The Montana Office of Public Instruction, along with its partners, are supporting P-3 learning communities in providing our youngest learners a great start with Preschool Guidelines and Early Learning Standards.

   <a href="http://opi.mt.gov/curriculum/EarlyChildhood/Index.html#gpm1\_3">http://opi.mt.gov/curriculum/EarlyChildhood/Index.html#gpm1\_3</a>

# • Montana College and Career Academic Standards

Montana's Content Standards are adopted by the Board of Public Education through the administrative rulemaking process. The content standards for academic subject areas are promulgated in Title 10, Chapters 53 and 54. The content standards are used by school districts to develop local curriculum and assessments in all the content areas including the arts, career and technical education, English language arts, health, physical education, digital literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and world languages. The K-12 content standards describe what students shall know, understand, and be able to do in these content areas. http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/Index.html

# • Montana College and Career Readiness Standards Commission

The Montana College and Career Readiness Standards Commission includes representatives from K-12, higher education, state agencies, and businesses to advise the Superintendent of Public Instruction on academic standards and best practices to prepare our students to succeed in college and careers.

http://www.opi.mt.gov/media\_Center/MCCRS.html

### • Graduation Matters Montana

Funding from the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation supports the implementation of locally-designed Graduation Matters initiatives that engage schools, communities, businesses, and families in a focused effort to increase the number of students who graduate prepared for college and careers.

http://graduationmatters.mt.gov/

# Career and Technical Education/Big Sky Pathways

Montana has over 500 approved Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and over 800 certified teachers in Agriculture, Business, Marketing, Family and Consumer Sciences, Industrial Technology, and Health Sciences. More than 150 Montana high schools participate in the federal Carl D. Perkins and state Career and Technical Education grant programs to support and improve their Career and Technical Education programs. The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) calls for states to offer "career and technical programs of study," known as Big Sky Pathways in Montana, as an option to students and their parents when planning for and completing future coursework. http://opi.mt.gov/programs/CTAE/CTE.html#gpm1\_1

#### Indian Education for All

In 1999, the Montana Legislature passed House Bill 528 into law (MCA 20-1-501), which is commonly referred to as Indian Education for All (IEFA). It is the constitutionally declared policy of this state to recognize the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and to be committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural heritage. http://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/20/1/20-1-501.htm

#### • State Systematic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

Under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) the OPI is required to annually report on the progress of the state in improving outcomes for students with disabilities and the overall compliance with the IDEA requirements. As a part of this process, the OPI has developed

a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that describes the collaborative efforts of the various OPI divisions to address the identified measurable result for improving student outcomes. In Montana, the goal of the SSIP is to increase the number and percentage of American Indian students with disabilities that complete school.

http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/SpecED/FY14PerfReport.pdf

#### Montana Higher Education Consortium (HEC)

HEC is a unique community of practice that has brought together general and special education faculty members from all teacher training programs in the State of Montana. The HEC has met twice a year for the past fifteen years to discuss critical issues and share ideas relating to teacher training programs in Montana. The meetings have created a strong partnership and collaboration between faculty members at the teacher training programs. The universities and colleges in Montana benefit from the information they receive from the Montana Office of Public Instruction. The HEC has connected and collaborated with two Office of Special Education Program (OESP) national centers: 1) International Resource Information System (IRIS) Center and 2) Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center.

http://www.taese.org/cms/index.php/majorinitiatives/2014-01-14-03-54-22

http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/

https://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/

# • Montana Teachers Dual Credit Incentive Program

Supported by the Montana University System (MUS), the Montana Dual Credit Incentive Program includes several projects to increase the pool of secondary teachers who are credentialed to deliver college courses in their high schools.

#### • Board of Regents Temporary Waiver Option

The Montana Board of Regents created a temporary waiver option for concurrent enrollment teachers to address qualification hurdles. This allows a teacher who is seeking to offer general education courses for concurrent enrollment without the required master's degree in the content area or master's degree in education to seek a temporary waiver for meeting that requirement.

# • Graduate Course Availability Assessment and Opportunities

The MUS is working with campuses to assess the availability of graduate credits in formats that work for teachers. This included schedules amenable to teachers, online availability, and also assessing the prevalence of courses open to non-degree seeking students, not requiring GRE, or open to student's ala carte enrollment.

http://mus.edu/DualCredit/Programs.asp

http://mus.edu/DualCredit/ProfessionalDevelopment.asp

# **Equitable Access**

Montana has worked to close the opportunity and achievement gaps in order to ensure educational equity for every student. The Office of Public Instruction is focusing on innovative planning that will address the barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. Both the agency and schools have an enhanced opportunity to work together and with other state partners to ensure that family income, race/ethnicity, English-language proficiency, and disability status no longer predict a child's educational opportunities and outcomes.

Montana has identified and prioritized the following factors that are essential to address in ensuring equity in education, especially in the lowest performing schools:

- increasing access to rigorous curriculum
- increasing access to effective teachers and leaders
- supporting English learners, students with disabilities, homeless, migrant, and other student subgroups
- addressing students' social-emotional learning needs

The OPI has targeted the priorities above to improve equity in opportunities and outcomes for every child. The intent of the OPI and its stakeholders is to focus efforts on working collaboratively with LEAs, statewide agencies, organizations, and other partners to advance equity by thinking more holistically across titles and provisions to advance a comprehensive strategy.

Transforming student and learning supports is essential in guaranteeing equity of opportunity to student's access and success in a broad, well-rounded education.

#### **Key Activities to Support Equitable Access**

- OPI collaboration with LEAs and state leadership partners, including MEA-MFT, School Administrators of Montana (SAM), Montana University System (MUS), Montana School Board Association (MSBA), Montana Small School Alliance (MSSA), and Montana Rural Education Association (MREA)
- Montana College and Career Readiness Standards revision and implementation process
- Equitable access for teachers and school leaders to evidence-based professional learning opportunities that improve instructional strategies and student learning and success
- Integrated multi-tiered system of support framework to promote equitable access for every student to an inclusive, well-rounded education with learning and student supports

#### Access to Well-rounded Education

The Montana Board of Public Education (BPE) adopts learning standards for key content areas that clearly define grade level expectations that progress toward the competencies students need to succeed in career and college. Pursuant to Article X Sect 1(2) of the Constitution of the state of Montana and statutes §20-1-501 and §20-9-309 2(c) MCA, the implementation of these standards must incorporate the distinct and unique cultural heritage of Montana American Indians.

The Montana Board of Public Education (BPE) has adopted the following content standards:

- Arts, July 2016
- Health Education, July 2016
- Physical Education, July 2016
- Science, Sept 2016
- Mathematics, Nov 2011
- English Language Arts and Literacy, Nov 2011
- Digital Literacy, January 2010
- Social Studies, Oct 2010
- Career and Technical Education, Oct 2010
- World Languages, October 1999

LEA curriculum and instruction as required by Montana (MCA 10.55.603) is aligned to the state academic standards. By aligning to these standards, LEAs safeguard that students have equal access to a challenging, well-rounded instructional and learning experience that ensures all students graduate prepared to succeed in any postsecondary setting and the workforce.

Montana recognizes the need to support LEAs efforts to provide every student a well-rounded academic education that provides other programs and options, including advanced and accelerated learning opportunities, career and technical education programs, health and wellness programs, physical education programs, arts and music programs, and educational technology programs.

With the passage of ESSA, the OPI and LEAs are now able to broaden the definition of a well-rounded education. While strong literacy and math skills are essential for student success, a well-rounded education allows students to develop skills and knowledge in a wide range of subjects and gives the OPI and LEAs the opportunity to get the balance right in places where the focus has become too narrow. Doing so ensures access and equity for all students.

# **Activities to Support a Well-Rounded Education**

#### Indian Education for All

The Indian Education Division works to provide all educators with the knowledge, skills and resources to implement the Indian Education for All Act (MCA 20-1-501) in a culturally responsive manner. Indian Education for All (IEFA) is an integral component in ongoing efforts to provide all students with a high quality education. IEFA offers students an opportunity to meet rigorous state standards in multiple content areas and grade levels as they learn about the distinct and unique cultures and heritages of American Indians.

http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/IndianEd/Index.html

#### The Montana Digital Academy

In 2009, the Montana Legislature passed a law which created the Montana Digital Academy, a statewide online public K-12 school (MCA 20-7-1201). The purposes of the Montana Digital Academy is to provide Montana students equitable access to distance learning opportunities that emphasize core subject matter, as well as offer dual credit and enrichment courses that are available to all school-age children through public school districts in the state of Montana. ESSA stakeholders recommended expanding offerings for middle school students on the Digital Academy.

http://montanadigitalacademy.org/

#### Teacher Learning Hub

The Montana Teacher Learning Hub is a learning network on the Moodle platform dedicated to providing free, high quality professional learning for all K-12 educators across Montana. Over the past three years, the MEA-MFT, MT Digital Academy, and OPI partnership project team has worked to develop over 160 online modules that focus on instructional strategies and student learning supports. The Hub has over 4,000 registered users. The Hub minimizes the time teachers spend away from their classrooms to attend training, as well as save school districts money by providing evidenced-based professional learning that does not require that teachers travel.

http://learninghub.mrooms.net/

#### Teacher Leadership Academies and Activities to Support All Students

The Office of Public Instruction, Montana University System (MUS), and other statewide partners are

building effective professional learning programs to support teacher leaders across the state. These leaders help guide and support local and regional teachers in developing and deepening a shared understanding of content knowledge and effective instructional strategies that engage and promote student learning and academic success.

#### Standards Based Teaching Renewing Educators Across Montana (STREAM)

This OPI and MUS partnership project has built a statewide regional professional learning infrastructure of regional K-12 Mathematics Teacher Leaders for the Montana Mathematics standards. This project is currently funded with Math Science Partnership Funds, Title II-B through Sept 2018. http://www.streammath.org/

## Montana Partnership with Regions for Excellence in STEM (MPRES)

This OPI and MUS partnership project provides teachers with professional development to assist them in teaching science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The project has built a statewide professional learning infrastructure of a statewide core group of MPRES Teacher Leaders who provide professional development to other teachers across the state. This project is currently funded with Math Science Partnership Funds, Title II-B through Sept 2018. <a href="http://www.mtscienceducation.org/">http://www.mtscienceducation.org/</a>

#### Mathematics Science Partnership Teacher Leadership Project (MSP-LEAD)

This OPI and MUS partnership project prepares teacher leaders in grades 5-12 to lead improvement in mathematics and science at the local, regional, and state level. Combining training, collaboration, and mentorship, MSP-LEAD applies best practices in professional learning to help teacher leaders share content knowledge and instructional strategies with other teachers in their regions and schools. This project is currently funded with Math Science Partnership Funds, Title II-B through Sept 2018. http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/MSP/

#### Flathead Reservation Algebra Collaborative (FRACtion)

This OPI and MUS partnership project first targeted the Flathead Indian Reservation schools to address implementing mathematics standards through Mathematical Practices. Working with the STREAM project leadership and the Indian Education Division, FRACtion has since spread to another reservation and plans to expand to other reservations in the future. This project is currently funded with Math Science Partnership Funds, Title II-B through Sept 2018.

http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/MSP/#gpm1\_2

# Symposium on Montana Mathematics Teaching (SuMMiT)

SuMMiT annually brings together leaders from Montana's universities, tribal colleges, and K-12 education to address issues, collaboratively solve problems in pre-service mathematics education, and align and expand evidenced-based initiatives for mathematics education. This project is currently funded with OPI and Math Science Partnership Funds, Title II-B through Sept 2018.

# Mathematics Pathways to Advance Teachers of High School (M-PATH)

This Montana State University project aims to advance a cohort of non-licensed or miss-assigned high school mathematics teachers on a pathway towards endorsement in mathematics with a suite of graduate-level content courses designed specifically for high school mathematics teachers. This project is currently funded with OPI and Math Science Partnership Funds, Title II-B through Sept 2018. <a href="http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/MSP/#gpm1\_2">http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/MSP/#gpm1\_2</a>

#### MT Math Teachers' Circles

This MUS project goal is to invigorate middle school and high school mathematics teachers through problem solving activities, to facilitate connections among and between local and regional mathematics teachers and mathematicians, and to create an ongoing, supportive, and collaborative community. This project is currently funded with Montana University System Title II-B funds through Sept 2018. http://hs.umt.edu/math/mtmathteacherscircle/

### Northwest Earth and Space Sciences Pipeline (NESSP)

The NESSP Project enhances existing earth and space science programs and launches new efforts throughout Washington, Oregon, and Montana with a particular focus on underserved and underrepresented communities. Based at the University of Washington, this project brings together educational institutions, K-12 teachers, and informal education organizations to inspire, teach, and recruit the next generation of students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This project is currently funded with NASA funding through Dec 2020.

http://www.washington.edu/news/2016/02/17/nasa-funded-consortium-to-support-science-education-in-washington-oregon-and-montana/

# MT Teacher Leader of the Arts Project

This Office of Public Instruction, Montana Arts Council, and Salish Kootenai College partnership project has built a statewide infrastructure of Montana Teacher Leader of the Arts who provide statewide support to other teachers in integrating the arts into their classroom instruction. The teacher leaders attend a summer institute at the Salish Kootenai College and continue as a professional learning community that has ongoing blended professional learning throughout the school yearend. This project is supported by Montana Arts Council, OPI, and NEA funding.

http://mtmusiced.com/montana-teacher-leaders-in-the-arts-2016-2017-applications-now-available/

# **Montana Writing Projects**

The Montana Writing Project, the Yellowstone Writing Project, and the Elk River Writing Project provide professional learning for teachers in order to improve writing and learning for all students. These three OPI and MUS partnership projects support teacher leadership in regions across the state. The Elk River Project specifically provides support to high-need LEAs with teacher workshops that integrate evidence-based literacy practices, Indian Education for All, and strategies to improve academic achievement for American Indians. These projects are supported by OPI, MUS, and the National Writing Project.

https://www.facebook.com/The-Montana-Writing-Project-MWP-139508476069438/about/

http://www.montana.edu/english/ywp.html

http://elkriverwritingproject.weebly.com/

#### **School Conditions**

Montana recognizes that safe and supportive school environments matter because they nurture and facilitate strong collaborative learning communities that support the whole child, the whole school as well as the whole community. Positive school conditions are essential for promoting student learning, academic achievement, school success, and healthy development. Positive school conditions are key to promoting effective risk prevention, positive youth development, and positive social relationships that support, respect, engage, and value every child.

The Office of Public Instruction has an essential role in providing assistance to LEAs in prioritizing their safe and healthy student activities to support positive school environments, which may include bullying,

violence and suicide prevention; health enhancement; substance use; mental health; and natural, technology and man-made disasters preparation and response plans.

#### **Key Initiatives to Support School Conditions**

#### Montana Behavior Initiative

The Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI), implemented over 25 years ago in Montana, is a proactive approach in creating behavioral supports and a social culture that establishes social, emotional, and academic success for all students. MBI uses a positive response to intervention framework which provides a three-tiered continuum of support and a problem solving process to assist schools in meeting the needs of and effectively educating all students. http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/MBI/

# My Voice Student Survey

The MBI and the OPI have been promoting and supporting the My Voice Survey as an evidence-based tool for LEAs to measure school climate. This student survey provides insight on student perceptions of their school experience. The survey is completed on-line and results are provided to a school based on eight conditions that affect student aspirations. http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/MBI/#p7GPc1\_8

#### • Bully-Free Montana Tool Kit

In 2015, the Montana legislature passed an unfunded anti-bullying law that simply reads, "Bullying of a student enrolled in a public K-12 school by another student or an employee is prohibited" (MCA 20-5-209). Prior to that new law, the OPI created a Bully-Free Toolkit which is a portfolio of templates on model policies, reporting structures, tools for parents, and other resources that districts may implement. The ESSA stakeholders have recommended that the Montana Office of Public Instruction expand the resources available to schools to support them in bully prevention efforts as funding allows.

#### Violence and Suicide Prevention

In 2015, the Montana legislature passed the *Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training Act* that charged the OPI to provide guidance and technical assistance to Montana schools (MCA 20-7-1310). Working with other state agencies and organizations, the OPI is in the process of identifying, guiding, and providing technical assistance to Montana schools. http://www.sprc.org/news/montana-school-policy-and-training-legislation

# School Safety and Emergency Operations Planning

http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/TitlePrgms/SafeSchools/bully.html

Montana law requires LEAs to adopt a school safety or emergency operations plan that addresses issues of school safety (MCA 20-1-401). The OPI has developed guidelines to support schools in assessing school conditions. This process helps LEAs to develop a safety structure that addresses physical, cultural, climate, psychological and emotional health for prevention and response to an emergency or incident. The OPI anticipates supporting schools in their planning and implementation process based on the outcomes of this self-assessment. http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/HealthTopics/index.html?gpm=1 7#gpm1 6

# • Mental Health Programs

The OPI has addressed school-based mental health through a variety of grants and funding sources across divisions. The OPI has several successful pilot projects, including wrap around services, suicide prevention protocols, interconnected system's framework, and trauma-informed education. The agency also currently assists LEAs in setting up tiered mental health services. The OPI recognizes that the lessons learned have not been shared with all LEAs and the pilot projects have not been implemented to scale statewide due to limited resources. Our ESSA stakeholders have recommended that the OPI and other mental health partners support the scaling up of the above mentioned projects so that more LEAs have access to evidence-based strategies for addressing mental health needs in their schools and communities. <a href="http://opi.mt.gov/programs/healthTopics/suicideaware.html">http://opi.mt.gov/programs/healthTopics/suicideaware.html</a> <a href="http://www.pbis.org/school/school-mental-health/interconnected-systems">http://www.pbis.org/school/school-mental-health/interconnected-systems</a>

# School-based Child Nutrition Programs

The Montana Office of Public Instruction Health Enhancement Division is dedicated to promoting nutritional wellbeing as part of a comprehensive learning environment focused on reducing disparity in student populations by encouraging participation in various school nutrition programs and through nutrition education in curriculum to promote healthy choices. <a href="http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School Nutrition/index.html">http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School Nutrition/index.html</a>

#### **Use of Technology**

Montana recognizes the need for all students to have access to robust technology and skill development to enhance their digital literacy across the various technologies. Basic technology operation skills provide the foundation upon which student capabilities and conceptual understanding are built to prepare students for their future work and careers. The Office of Public Instruction is working 1) to expand student learning opportunities with technology opportunities for all students, 2) to afford equitable access to historically disadvantaged students to evidence-based learning materials and supports, and 3) to increase Montana educators' capacity for using blended learning opportunities for students to support personalized-learning and supports.

In order to support students' access to technology and instructional opportunities and to empower teachers who continually innovate with technology, the Office of Public Instruction recognizes that partnerships must be enhanced or formed both within the state agency and with stakeholders including other agencies, organizations, higher education, and business and industry. The intent of these partnerships is two-fold: 1) to provide students with unique opportunities to experience technology applications and innovations in business and industry and 2) to find additional funding for evidence-based, innovative digital learning projects.

# **Key Initiatives and Activities to Support Technology**

#### Digital Academy

In 2009, the Montana Legislature passed a law which created the Montana Digital Academy, a statewide online public K-12 school (MCA 20-7-1201). The purposes of the Montana Digital Academy is to provide Montana students equitable access to distance learning opportunities that emphasize core subject matter, as well as offer dual credit and enrichment courses that are available to all school-age children through public school districts in the state of Montana. ESSA stakeholders recommended expanding offerings for middle school students on the Digital Academy.

http://montanadigitalacademy.org/

#### Teacher Learning Hub

The Montana Teacher Learning Hub is a learning network on the Moodle platform dedicated to providing free, high quality professional learning for all K-12 educators across Montana. Over the past three years, the MEA-MFT, MT Digital Academy, and OPI partnership project team has worked to develop over 160 online modules that focus on instructional strategies and student learning supports. The Hub has over 4000 registered users who minimize the time they spend away from their classrooms to attend training, as well as save school districts money by providing free evidenced-based professional learning that does not require that teachers travel. <a href="http://learninghub.mrooms.net/">http://learninghub.mrooms.net/</a>

# • EdReady Montana

EdReady is a personalized-learning mathematics readiness tool available at no cost to Montana schools from middle school to high school to college and adult basic education. This interactive online program provides a variety of student learning and support options:

- o prepare for upcoming local math classes or curriculum
- supplement their skills while taking a math class
- o revisit possible gaps in general math skills
- o become better prepared for college math
- o practice math skills needed for a desired career path
- o study and review math concepts for a standardized exam

# http://edreadymontana.org/

#### Montana ACT Prep

With the OPI and the Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) partnership that includes funding from Montana GEAR UP, Montana offers free on-line ACT prep for all 10,700 students in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Students have access to practice tests and essays with complete scoring, content reviews, and diagnostic tests via the internet. Site licenses provide tools for educators to analyze data in order to impact and individualize instruction. http://mus.edu/gearup/

# Parent and Family Engagement

As a large and sparsely populated rural state, Montana has historically been dependent on parent, family, and community engagement as a cornerstone of a child's public education. With ESSA's focus on enhancing family and community engagement to help support every child's success, the Office of Public Instruction and its stakeholders have identified what is working and which innovative activities need to be expanded and enhanced to assist more school communities. The OPI has identified a collaborative agency team, working across divisions, who will work to expand an array of effective initiatives and activities that will be promoted and shared across divisions, programs, and statewide partnership projects.

The OPI plans to create a unified agency vision and mission to assist all LEAs in engaging families and communities in a consistent manner across programs funded within the LEA. The OPI anticipates building a portfolio of measurable models and programs that align and coordinate across divisions, programs, and statewide partners. The OPI will work to support LEAs in increasing the effectiveness of implementation of family engagement that is aligned across the district including adult education and family literacy (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act). As resources allow, the OPI will partner

with Education Northwest in order to assess current programs, develop a unified vision and process of implementation to address the unique needs of each community whose needs may include high poverty, American Indian families and communities, military families, families of English learners, and rural and isolated communities.

In order to accomplish this mission to strengthen parent and family engagement in Montana schools, the OPI will collaborate with other state agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Corrections, Department of Justice, and Office of The Commissioner of Higher Education. Other partnerships and supports include statewide and local non-profits and foundations that support and engage children and families.

## **Key Initiatives to Parent and Family Engagement**

- Montana Behavior Initiative (MBI) http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/MBI/
- Parent Teacher Home Visit Project http://www.pthvp.org
- Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) <a href="https://www.wested.org/service/academic-parent-teacher-teams-aptt-family-engagement-in-education/">https://www.wested.org/service/academic-parent-teacher-teams-aptt-family-engagement-in-education/</a>
- LEA Family/Home Coordinators
- LEA Head Start housed within the K-12 system

#### **Identification of English Learners**

Montana has created standardized statewide entrance procedures for the accurate and timely identification of English learners (ELs).

# • Home Language Survey

The process begins with every enrolling student's parent or guardian filling out a home language survey in order to gather data on languages spoken in the home or in the student's life. The home language survey establishes eligibility for the student to be screened on the WIDA W-APT Language screener.

## W-APT Language Screener

This screener assesses students in all four domains of language (speaking, listening, reading and writing). If a student's scores fall below the English language proficiency criteria, it is determined that they are an English learner and qualify for EL services. This process will take place and an EL identification status will be completed by an LEA within 30 days of enrollment. To ensure this occurs, there will be an assurance in the E-grant application for ESEA funds.

#### Teacher Observation Checklist

Based on experience, Montana has created a second entry point for eligibility of ELs by through a Teacher Observation Checklist. This checklist allows classroom teachers the opportunity to observe students language and determine if that student should be screened on the language screener based on a language other than English impacting a student's ability to meet the same challenging state standards that all children are expected to meet. Once it is established that a language other than English may be impacting the student, they are given the WIDA W-APT screener to determine EL status.

## • Exit Criteria

Montana has developed English language proficiency criteria for ALL ELs to determine when an EL no longer requires EL services. An EL must obtain a 5.0 or better score on the overall composite score on the WIDA ACCESS 2.0 or WIDA ACCESS Kindergarten assessment. The student must also obtain a 4.0 or better score on both the reading and writing subtests in order to be considered eligible for exiting EL status. Once a student has obtained these scores, schools will develop a plan to review the EL data and make a determination if they are performing at grade level expectations in English and are able to fully participate in society. If these criteria are met, then the student is eligible to exit EL status.

#### Outreach and Technical Assistance

In order for The OPI to communicate the new standardized procedures, the OPI will provide guidance on the OPI website, face-to-face trainings, Teacher Hub Online Classes, technical assistance, regional trainings and connections with Title I conferences and training. Throughout the outreach process, The OPI will collaborate with the Title I Group of Practitioners regarding the implementation of the new procedures and continually develop appropriate and meaningful outreach.

#### **Identification of Students with Disabilities**

Under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) the Office of Public Instruction is responsible for providing guidance and support to every LEA in implementing the Child Find requirements. In order to ensure timely and accurate identification of students with disabilities, the OPI conducts on-site compliance monitoring to ensure the implementation of strong child find activities and to provide data used in determining the appropriate supports for each LEA. The OPI monitors district performance and uses the data available to target the professional development and technical assistance activities funded by the IDEA.

The OPI anticipates the professional development monies available through the various title programs will be used to provide training that supplements existing programs with a particular focus on high ability/high potential and English learners that are also students with disabilities.

#### Key Initiatives and Activities to Support Identification of Students with Disabilities

- Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI)

  MBI provides training and technical as
  - MBI provides training and technical assistance to LEAs in implementing a system of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to improve school climate and parent and family involvement; and, to reduce disciplinary removals of students. http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/MBI/
- Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD)
  CSPD is a statewide system that supports regional councils to develop ongoing professional development based on the needs of the LEAs in Montana's five educational service regions. In addition to conducting a needs survey, each region examines data regarding student performance and outcomes to more effectively target the professional development offered to support instructional strategies to support student learning and success. <a href="http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/CSPD/">http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/CSPD/</a>
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

This Montana MTSS project provides training and ongoing support to LEAs in developing and implementing an integrated multi-tiered framework at the building level. LEAs create an infrastructure for the promoting the delivery of high-quality instruction for all students and, when needed, providing additional student supports and interventions varying in intensity. http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/MTSS.html

# **Other State Strategies**

### Homeless Students - Title IX, Part A of ESSA

The OPI views the Homeless Education Program as a framework for supporting homeless students across the state. Due to the rural and frontier nature of many LEAs, it can be a daunting challenge to provide the necessary resources to poor communities to create and support a robust program to support homeless students. The OPI encourages all communities to view Homeless Education through the lens of an integrated multi-tiered system of support framework. By using a systematic and systemic approach to meeting the needs of all students, homeless students will be able to access interventions designed to increase their academic success and positively impact their social and emotional well-being.

As resources allow, the OPI will target LEAs for intensive technical assistance and professional development to increase the identification of homeless children and youths in rural communities through the use of state and local data on child poverty, school based nutrition programs, and the location of homeless shelters and other services. The OPI will promote and expand the collaborative efforts with the Montana Continuum of Care, and with local agencies and non-profits providing housing and other supports to homeless children and youths.

• American Indian Achievement: Based on experience, the OPI will expand and enhance culturally responsive student supports to schools serving high populations of American Indian students to increase identification of and services to homeless students. In order to accomplish this goal, the OPI will develop training materials to meet the unique needs of schools in American Indian communities, in both urban and rural settings. The OPI will partner with agencies and non-profits providing housing and services to homeless families, children and youths to increase collaboration between LEAs and local service providers. The OPI also will partner with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, Montana School Counseling Association, and other federally funded higher education programs (Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services) to provide supports to homeless and former foster youth at all Montana public and tribal colleges to increase college enrollment, attendance, and success for at-risk youth.

#### Title I D, Subpart 1

The Title I, Part D, Subpart 1 Program will continue to support the educational programming provided to children and youths in the custody of the Montana Department of Corrections (DOC). Programs for juveniles will continue to emphasize academic enrichment through the provision of high quality career and technical education programs. Programs for youths up to age 21 will focus on completion of alternative diploma programs and other adult education programs.

The OPI Neglected and Delinquent Coordinator will increase collaborative efforts with the Career and Technical Education Division to provide professional development and technical assistance to the DOC's juvenile correctional facilities. The Coordinator will also partner with the Special Education Division to support the work of the High Tier Community of Practice to pilot a program focused on successfully

transitioning students between DOC facilities, therapeutic facilities, group homes, and LEAs providing education, support, and housing to juvenile justice, foster care, and other at-risk children and youths.

As resources allow, the Coordinator will work with the Department of Corrections, other facilities and agencies, and local LEAs with high populations of system involved children and youths to develop a portfolio of targeted supports and interventions aimed at increasing the graduation rates of these students and their successful transition to college or careers.

#### Title I D, Subpart 2

The Title I, Part D, Subpart 2 Program will continue to provide assistance to LEAs with high numbers of students who are at-risk due to their contact with the juvenile justice system. LEAs that currently receive the sub-grant are required to coordinate with local programs funded under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

LEAs will be asked to align their transition programs with the work of the High Tier Community of Practice to increase student success as they transition between DOC facilities, therapeutic facilities, group homes, and LEAs providing education, support, and housing to juvenile justice, foster care, and other at-risk children and youths.

As resources allow, the Coordinator will also focus on increasing services to children and youths transitioning between tribal juvenile detention facilities and LEAs, with a focus on collaborating with tribal councils and elders to create culturally appropriate intervention programs.

# 21st Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) will continue to support the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment and parental engagement opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly for students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. These centers help students meet state and local standards in core academic subject areas, such as reading and math, and also offer a broad array of enrichment activities that support socio-emotional learning, technology, recreation, cultural, health and educational services to families of participating children. The programs are designed to be a local collaborative effort where schools, community-based organizations, towns, counties, and business partners come together to provide academic support, enrichment, and a safe, healthy environment during non-school hours for children at the elementary, middle and high school level.

The Montana 21st CCLC program will continue to collaborate with the Montana University system, local and national businesses in providing elementary, middle, and high schools students with STEM opportunities that afford our students with opportunities to compete at the state, national, and world level. Our Native American students were the first Native students to Attend Nationals and Worlds in the world's largest STEM based program, (F1 in schools.) Through these opportunities are students have gain math, science, language arts and career readiness skills. The educators have received professional development in the STEM fields and the opportunity to learn about career development through the Career Development Facilitator Training (CDF). Our educators were the first in the state to receive this nationally recognized certification.

Grantees will continue to collaborate with all title programs and school day staff in aligning their programs with the school day. Through the process of aligning with the school day the programs will

offer a broad array of high-quality activities including youth development, drug and violence prevention, career development, art and music, along with the academic support in the core disciplines. The Montana 21st CCLC program coordinator collaborates with other OPI and state departments in providing academic, enrichment and parental engagement opportunities for the students and families. Currently the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program coordinator is working with Indian Education and the Homeless programs in combining resources to better serve Montana schools, communities, and families.

# Title V B, Subpart 2

The Office of Public Instruction will approve and monitor the Rural and Low-Income School grants to ensure that 100% of the grants implement activities allowed under the applicable title program regulations by spring 2018.



# **Program-specific Requirements**

# A. Title I, A: the process and criteria to waive the 40% school wide poverty threshold.

Schools that would like to move from a targeted assistance program (TAS) to a school-wide program (SWP), but are under the 40 percent poverty threshold, will be required to complete the following process to be eligible for a waiver: (1) The district will send the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) a letter requesting a waiver for a school that does not meet the 40 percent threshold to become a school-wide program. The OPI will notify the district that the school will need to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment with its stakeholders to determine the need to switch from a TAS to SWP program. (2) The school will submit to OPI the outcome of the needs assessment along with a rationale for why the change is in the best interest of the students in the school. A three-member review team from OPI will review the needs assessment and rationale. (3) If it is determined that the change is in the best interest of the students, the school will be allowed to complete the rest of the school-wide process. Should OPI determine that the plan does not meet the best interest of the students, the school will be able to appeal the decision along with new facts to support the change to the OPI Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services.

#### B. Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children

a. Description of the system for identification and recruitment of eligible migratory children on a Statewide basis, including the identification and recruitment of preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and how the State will verify and document the number of eligible migratory children aged 3 through 21 residing in the State on an annual basis:

The success of the Montana Migrant Education Program (MEP) is dependent upon a systematic, statewide, vigorous, well-planned identification and recruitment (ID&R) effort overseen by the State Educational Agency (SEA). Because Montana has the 4<sup>th</sup> largest land mass of the 50 states, and many communities that are both rural and isolated, the MT MEP uses two statewide recruiters and one regional recruiter as year-round staff, and several seasonal recruiters during the summer months to accomplish these goals. The function of recruiters is to locate and certify all migrant children ages 3-21 who meet the statutorily mandated criteria for eligibility, including preschool migratory children and children who have dropped out of school who are in the State of Montana during the performance period between September 1 and August 31 of each year.

All recruiters are provided extensive and ongoing annual training regarding the ID&R of migrant children using the ID&R curriculum provided by the Office of Migrant Education (OME), the Montana State MEP ID&R manual, Migrant Student

Information Exchange (MSIX) guidelines, and other relevant and updated policy guidance tools which are currently available. Specifically, core eligibility, family history, and demographic data is collected by trained recruiters through a direct family interview and documented on the national Certificate of Eligibility (COE). These data are collected on COEs throughout the performance period and validated at the Local Educational Agency/Local Operating Agency (LEA/LOA) and SEA level by migrant administrators who are trained to detect any errors or questions raised by any given COE. Once the COE is certified as valid by the SEA, data are entered in the New Generation System (NGS) migrant student database by trained data entry personnel and once again reviewed by local and state administrators. In addition, eligible migrant students residing in Montana during the regular school term are flagged as such in the state student data base called AIM, to further ensure migrant eligibility awareness at the LEA level.

NGS is a web-based inter/intrastate information network that communicates demographic, educational, and health data of migrant students to educators and stakeholders throughout the nation. Through it, educators can generate a student transfer document to facilitate academic placement as the student transfers schools. NGS also allows educators to generate various student-level, management, and OME performance reports, and MSIX uploads on a nightly basis. Highly trained staff comply with the file specifications for the federally mandated EDEN and the Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR). In addition to reports and functions designed to strengthen migrant ID&R practices at the local level, NGS also has an extensive management level report section dedicated to meeting the requirements of the CSPR. This function provides complete student level reports used to account for all the migrant children in the ED Facts data files. MEP State staff review these reports periodically during the year and again before the CSPR is finalized to ensure the accuracy of the ED Facts file submission.

The Consortia States of NGS also have an active advisory committee that addresses ongoing changes or requirements for the system in addition to the management team of Consortia State Directors, who ensure that the overall system requirements are met by the NGS Contractor. The management team provides the office space, servers, and upgrades to the system throughout the performance period in addition to a help desk for users and training of Consortia State users.

To further assure the quality and validity of MEP ID&R, periodic re-interviewing of families is done in compliance with the regulations governing the re-interviewing process. The MSIX notification system and the missed enrollment report also are used to ensure that all potential migrant students are found and identified throughout the performance period.

b. Description of how OPI and districts will assess the unique educational needs of migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school:

The goal of the Montana Migrant Education Program (MEP) is to provide leadership to the field regarding programs and services that promote academic excellence and equity for the migrant students of Montana. To achieve this goal, the Montana MEP strives to create conditions that empower educators working with migrant children to collaborate in designing programs that build upon student strengths, eliminate barriers, provide continuity of education, and produce levels of performance for migrant students that meet or exceed those of the general student population. The Montana MEP helps migrant children and youth overcome challenges of mobility, frequent absences, late enrollment into school, social isolation, and other difficulties associated with a migratory life, so they can be successful in school. Furthermore, the Montana MEP prioritizes services to migrant children and youth who are failing, or most at risk of failing to meet the state's content and performance standards, and whose education has been interrupted during the performance period.

MEP funds must be used to address the unmet needs of migrant children that result from migrant children's lifestyle to permit them to participate effectively in school. The children of migrant, mobile agricultural workers and fishers have unique needs due to high poverty, high mobility, and interrupted schooling. It is important to understand the unique needs of migrant students as distinct from the English Language Learners (ELLs) or other special populations who are not mobile, so that those distinct needs are addressed in the service delivery planning process.

Each year, the Montana MEP updates the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) to identify the needs of Montana migrant students. Every 2-3 years, the SEA convenes a Needs Assessment Committee (NAC) consisting of SEA staff and parent/community and school district representatives (teachers, administrators, and other school staff). The Montana CNA follows the process outlined in the Migrant Education Comprehensive Needs Assessment Toolkit: A Tool for State Migrant Directors (2012). The process follows OME's Three-Phase Model that consists of Phase I: What is a Comprehensive Needs Assessment? Phase II: Gathering and Analyzing Data; and Phase III: Decision Making. During NAC meetings, concern statements are reviewed and revised along with needs indicators and needs statements. The NAC reviews data related to migrant student achievement, attendance, mobility, and migrant activities. In addition, MEP staff and parents from across the state are surveyed to determine the types and extent of needs of migrant students living in isolated locations. Data analysis and descriptions of the procedures are recorded in the annual CNA reports.

Concern statements form the basis of the development of strategies and measurable program outcomes (MPOs) developed during the Service Delivery Plan (SDP) process. In addition to concerns, need indicators, and need statements, solutions are proposed to improve student achievement, the possible effects that the solutions may have on the causes of the need, the feasibility of implementing the solutions, the acceptability to stakeholders, and suggested criteria for evaluating the results of the implemented solutions.

c. Description of how OPI and school districts will ensure that the unique educational needs of migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school, are identified and addressed through the full range of services that are available for migratory children from appropriate local, State, and Federal educational programs.

The Office of Migrant Education's Continuous Improvement Process is implemented by the Montana MEP to help ensure that participating migrant students benefit from a planning process that involves multiple stakeholders from across the State using a systematic process. The process begins with the CNA that informs the development of the SDP and continues on through program implementation, and program evaluation.

In accordance with the Statutory and Regulatory guidelines provided by OME, the comprehensive State SDP should be updated when the SEA: 1) updates the statewide CNA; 2) changes the State performance targets and/or MPOs; 3) significantly changes the services that the MEP will provide statewide; or 4) significantly changes the evaluation design. Also, the guidance provided is that given these various changes, the SDP should be updated about every three years. The last update of the Montana MEP SDP was in January 2015, with a plan in place to update the SDP during 2017-18.

The primary purpose of the CNA is to guide the overall design of the Montana MEP on a statewide basis, as well as to assure that the findings of the CNA are folded into the comprehensive state plan for service delivery. The SDP helps the Montana MEP develop and articulate a clear vision of:

- 1) the needs of Montana migrant children;
- 2) the services the Montana MEP will provide on a statewide basis;
- the Montana MEP's MPOs and how they help achieve the State's performance targets;
   and
- 4) the mechanism to evaluate whether and to what degree the program is effective.

The Montana MEP CNA results provide a blueprint for the delivery of services within the State for migrant children and youth, including preschool, dropout and out-of-school youth. An SDP Committee was formed with representatives of the key stakeholders in migrant

education within the state. Migrant parents and community members were represented along with MEP educators, SEA staff, administrators, and recruiters.

The Montana SDP includes the five required components of the SDP (State Performance Targets, Needs Assessment, Service Delivery Strategies, MPOs, and Evaluation) and the alignment of these components. Each of the components has their own function in the SDP, but are linked to provide a cohesive and consistent approach to enable migrant students to achieve performance goals and targets. Other components addressed in the SDP include Priority for Services Students, Implementation and Accountability Plan, Professional Development Plan for Staff, Parent Involvement and Development Plan, Identification and Recruitment (ID&R) Plan, and Exchange of Student Records. It is important that the SDP ensures that MEP activities are aligned with the Montana Common Core Standards. The four goal areas (Goal Area 1: Reading; Goal Area 2: Mathematics; Goal Area 3: High School Graduation; Goal Area 4: School Readiness) are aligned with the Montana State performance targets and consider the College, Career & Culturally Ready standards.. As a supplemental program, MEP funds for services are only used to address the unmet needs of migratory children after all other sources of funding -whether local, state or other federal funding have been made available. All MEP staff are trained to make referrals to local, state and other federal programs prior to initiating any MEP -funded services. In the case of summer school programming, funded LEAs/LOAs are required to collaborate with other state, local or federally funded providers prior to using MEP funds. Those services may include Title I Part A, Tittle II, Special Education, HEW funded health programs and Head Start programs and others.

d. Description of how OPI and school districts, will use funds received under Title I, Part C to promote interstate and intrastate coordination of services for migratory children, including how the State will provide for educational continuity through the timely transfer of pertinent school records, including information on health, when children move from one school to another, whether or not such move occurs during the regular school year:

Because migrant students move frequently, a central function of the MEP has always been to reduce the effects of educational disruption on migrant children in order to improve their educational achievement. The MEP has been, and continues to be, a leader in coordinating resources and providing integrated services to migrant children and their families. MEP projects also have developed a wide array of strategies that enable schools that serve the same migrant students to communicate and coordinate with one another. In Montana, inter/intrastate collaboration is focused on data collection, transfer, and maintenance through the following activities:

- Year round ID&R and collaboration with sending states;
- Use of NGS and MSIX for interstate student record transfer;
- Participation in the Management Team function of NGS with other state leaders;
- Coordination with AIM, the State's student information system for regular term students;

- Advocacy for inclusion of MEP data needs at SEA;
- Participation in the SMART learning Consortia;
- Participation in the Midwest Migrant Education Resource Center (MMERC);
- Partnering in the OSY and Pre-School Consortia;
- Implementing Project MASTERY (statewide lending library through the MMERC)
- Participation in the National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education (NASDME) and the National Migrant Education Conference for Professional Development;
- Implementation of the multi-state "Count on Me" tutoring consortia;
- Chairing the NASDME Student Scholarship Initiative;
- Coordinating secondary credit accrual with counselors and educators in other states in which students are enrolled;
- Participation in Texas and Washington State Interstate Initiatives specific to secondary students and credit accrual;
- Participation in the National PASS Association;
- Attending inter- and intra-state meetings as necessary for the implementation of the MEP.

The following are descriptions of some of inter/intrastate projects in which the Montana MEP participates. Project SMART targets the unique needs in math of migrant students in the states of Texas, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, New York and Michigan. SMART also utilizes the secondary PASS curriculum, incorporating a scientifically-based design for curricula that promotes the comprehension of math concepts and the preparation of migrant students for higher level math encompassing Five Dimensions of Mathematical Proficiency. Project MASTERY – Mobile Access for Students and Teachers to Educational Resources Year Round is an extension of the mobile technology lab concept. Project MASTERY provides access for migrant students to enhanced educational services by bringing a wide variety of technology-related instruction and classroom resources which are loaned to the rural schools as part of a cooperative agreement between the Montana MEP and the Minnesota Migrant Education Resource Center (MMERC). MASTERY staff uses a four-wheel drive vehicle to visit rural and isolated schools that have enrolled migrant students.

MASTERY also enables the Montana MEP to identify and recruit students in the most remote, non-project areas of the State where ID&R efforts had been all but impossible in the past. MASTERY teachers visit all of the schools in rural areas where one or more migrant students have been identified. They provide classroom materials, technological support, and teacher workshops throughout the whole state of Montana, as well as planning services to regular term projects. MASTERY serves as a catalyst for ID&R by informing local school districts unfamiliar with the MEP what needs to be done to ensure that migrant students are enrolled in the most appropriate educational programs. The goals of MASTERY are to increase migrant student access to technology and resource materials during the regular

school term, and provide teachers with professional development on the use of technology and resource materials to enhance the learning and achievement of migrant students, as well as providing increased intrastate coordination with LEAA. To ensure that our highly mobile students are receiving continuity of instruction, considerable statewide resources are allocated for interstate coordination with the sending state of Washington, and well as with Texas and other states to which migrant students travel to/from ensure that their education and support service needs are being met. Certificates of Eligibility are shared with sending districts to accommodate rapid identification and recruitment of shared students.

The Montana MEP relies on a number of sources of information and vehicles for the collection, storage and retrieval of data and the generation of reports that reflect inter/intra state mobility. Local MEP directors and other staff including MEP recruiters/ advocates are key to collecting parent and staff surveys, student achievement and other outcome data, and implementation data such as staff training rosters and focus group results to improve educational continuity of migrant students. As stated, the Montana MEP uses the following main sources of information to store, maintain, and transfer migrant student records: The New Generation System (NGS), Achievement in Montana (AIM) State Data base; Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX). These information systems are the basis for interstate and intra state coordination and continuity for the MTMEP. Specifically, the NGS (https://ngsmigrant.com/) is a web-based interstate information network that communicates demographic, educational, and health data on migrant students to educators throughout the nation. The system allows educators to record the movement of migrant students through the educational process by producing online records of a student's educational progress and health profile. Educators can generate a student transfer document to facilitate academic placement as the student transfers schools. The NGS also allows educators to generate various student-level, management, and OME performance reports.

NGS is secured in a variety of ways, one of which is password authentication. A user ID and password is issued once a completed application is received and approved. Consortium members are able to query, add, and update records on students, enrollments, assessments, special needs, and various health data. For academic records, members can add, update, consolidate, or view information on unresolved courses, failed courses, and recommended courses, passed courses, academic credits, state graduation plans, and graduation requirements. Information on facilities (SSID), facility contacts, and supplemental programs provided to students at a facility can be input.

Needs assessment information is generated in home-base States and transferred to Montana through NGS for Texas-based students, and the Migrant Student Data & Recruiting (MSDR) database for students home-based in the State of Washington. Examples of data received from home-base states include age-appropriate grade placement of Montana migrant students, information on the number of migrant students not meeting grade level

proficiency, language proficiency determinations, and state exit-level test scores. The U.S. Department of Education was mandated by Congress, in Section 1308 (b) of ESEA, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, to assist States in developing effective methods for the electronic transfer of student records and in determining the number of migratory children in each state. Further, it must ensure the linkage of migrant student record systems across the country. In accordance with the mandate, the Department has implemented the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX) initiative whose primary mission is to ensure the appropriate enrollment, placement, and accrual of credits for migrant children.

Montana is fully operational in MSIX and the Montana Migrant System/NGS interfaces with it as well as with the state student data based (AIM) to allow the OPI to complete reports on interstate and intrastate student records. Montana is able to provide student data, as required, for the State Comprehensive State Performance Report (CSPR) and to meet other Federal and State data requirements.

Ongoing training is provided to Montana MEP staff throughout the year on all of these systems

e. Description of the unique educational needs of the State's migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school, based on the State's most recent comprehensive needs assessment:

LEA sub grantees compile data based on the educational record and perceived needs of every migratory child enrolled in their programs and enter that data into NGS. In addition to the LEA data, needs assessment information is generated in home base states and transferred to Montana through MSIX. Examples of data received from home base states include age-appropriate grade placement of Montana migrant students, information on the number of migrant students not meeting grade level proficiency, language proficiency determinations, and state exit-level test scores when available. In addition, various other data collection methods are employed to assess needs and identify solutions. These methods include:

- Surveys completed by MEP staff, recruiters, and migrant students and parents;
- Reviews of State assessment results in reading and mathematics with comparisons made between migrant students and non-migrant peers, and State performance targets;
- Reports on achievement and credit accrual toward high school graduation generated through NGS;
- Reports on student achievement in reading and math using Summer Success program assessments, Count on Me Math assessments, and Math CIG assessments;

- Reports on student achievement in technology using the Student Technology Use Assessment;
- Reports on preschool student achievement of readiness skills as measured by the Montana Preschool Outcomes Assessment; and
- Reports regarding OSY and their particular needs as recorded by advocates and recruiters;
- Reviews of support service needs and MEP staff professional development needs.

Needs assessment data reflect a wide range of challenges. This data indicates a need for both direct supplemental instructional services in reading and math, as well as for programs that support instruction including counseling, mentoring, graduation coaching, technology-based instruction, and other supplemental supportive service needs. Following is a summary of the needs of migratory students in Montana during 2016-17.

# High Mobility/ Interrupted Schooling

There is a great need for instructional services to provide for continuity of instruction as more than half of the eligible migrant students in Montana (53%) had migrated within the past 12 months.

# Reading and Math Needs

Results from State assessment results, *Summer Success Reading*, and MathSMART assessments show that migrant students in Montana need intensive supplemental reading and math instruction during the regular school year and summer months to bring them up to grade level. Results show that students of all grades are not performing at their expected levels. This data is corroborated across the multiple assessments performed and reported by Montana MEP staff.

# ESL Instruction

Half of Montana's migrant students are English learners (ELs). This demonstrates the need for increased collaboration with Title I Part A and Title II to provide intensive English as a second language (ESL) instruction during both the regular school year in their home districts and the summer months.

# Preschool Student Needs

Preschool students assessed with the Preschool Outcomes Checklist arrived in Montana scoring 36% of mastery on school readiness skills.

# Technology Needs

Student needs in the area of technology skills are great with students scoring at 60% short of mastery prior to receiving technology instruction.

# Support Services Needs

Nearly all of the participating students were in need of social work referrals, health and dental services, outreach or advocacy during the year. Nearly three-fourths of parents responding to a survey reported that they had a need for books, school supplies, or computers/ Internet access.

Secondary
Credit Accrual

Nearly one-third of all eligible migrant high school students/OSY needed high school credit accrual during 2015-16, indicating that

they were credit deficient.

Professional Development

There is a continuing need to build the capacity of MEP staff to serve the academic needs of students in Montana. Professional development needs that exist address technology,

curriculum/instruction, MEP updates, and training on the different

programs provided to migrant students in Montana.

Parent/ Family Needs The majority of staff responding to the needs assessment survey felt that parents need training on technology use and strategies for helping their child with math and reading. The majority of parents responding also reported a need to learn strategies for helping their child with math and reading.

f. Description of the current measurable program objectives and outcomes for Title I, part C, and the strategies the SEA will pursue on a statewide basis to achieve such objectives and outcomes:

Following are the MPOs and Strategies for Goal Area 1: Reading

**MPO 1.1**: In 2016-17 and each year thereafter, at least 98% of migrant students receiving supplemental reading instruction will be promoted to the next grade level.

**MPO 1.2**: In 2016-17 and each year thereafter, Project MASTERY will support migrant students in reading, literacy, and other language arts as measured by a rating of 4 or above on the Fidelity of Strategy Implementation (FSI) tool.

**MPO 1.3**: In 2016-17 and each year thereafter, migrant students receiving supplemental reading instruction will increase their reading skills by at least 10% as measured by Summer Success Reading and other reading fluency assessments.

**Strategy 1.1**: Each year beginning in 2016-17, local projects providing services during the regular school year will provide migrant students with supplemental, research-based academic interventions for extended learning opportunities in reading with appropriate progress monitoring and instructional adjustments.

**Strategy 1.2**: Each year beginning in 2016-17, Project MASTERY staff will provide supplemental, needs-based services (i.e., MMERC instructional materials, computers loans) during the regular school year to migrant students throughout the State in locations without a local MEP project to support reading, literacy, and other language arts.

**Strategy 1.3**: Each year beginning in 2016-17, local projects providing services during the summer will provide migrant students with supplemental, research-based reading instruction utilizing the Summer Success Reading program and other integrated reading programs.

Following are the MPOs and Strategies for Goal Area 2: Mathematics

- **MPO 2.1**: In 2016-17 and each year thereafter, at least 98% of migrant students receiving supplemental math instruction will be promoted to the next grade level.
- **MPO 2.2**: In 2016-17 and each year thereafter, Project MASTERY will support migrant students in math, science, and other related subject areas as measured by a rating of 4 or above on the Fidelity of Strategy Implementation (FSI) tool.
- **MPO 2.3**: In 2016and each summer thereafter, migrant students receiving supplemental math instruction via Project SMART will increase their math skills by at least 25% as measured by Project SMART math assessments.
- **MPO 2.4**: In 2016 and each summer thereafter, at least 75% of migrant students assessed receiving supplemental math instruction via the Count on Me program will increase their math skills as measured by the Count on Me assessment.
- **Strategy 2.1**: Each year beginning in 2016-17, local projects providing services during the regular school year will provide migrant students with supplemental, research-based academic interventions for extended learning opportunities in math with appropriate progress monitoring and instructional adjustments.
- **Strategy 2.2**: Each year beginning in 2016-17, Project MASTERY staff will provide supplemental, needs-based services during the regular school year to migrant students throughout the State in locations without a local MEP project to support mathematics, science, and other related subjects.
- **Strategy 2.3**: Each summer beginning in 2015, local projects providing services during the summer will provide migrant students with supplemental, research-based math instruction utilizing Project SMART.
- **Strategy 2.4**: Each summer beginning in 2016, the MEP will implement the "Count on Me" math in the orchards program to students that migrate to the Flathead Lake area.

Following are the MPOs and Strategies for Goal Area 3: High School Graduation

- **MPO 3.1**: In 2016-17 and each year thereafter, migrant students enrolled in secondary education courses in Montana will complete at least 50% of the courses in which they are enrolled.
- **MPO 3.2**: In 2016 and each summer thereafter, after receiving technology-based instruction migrant students will increase their technology skills by at least 20% as measured by the Student Technology Use Assessment.
- **MPO 3.3**: In 2016-17 and each year thereafter, after participating in MEP-sponsored leadership activities, 80% of students will report an increase in their development as leaders as measured by a pre/post self-assessment.
- **Strategy 3.1**: Each year beginning in 2016-17, local projects will provide migrant students with access to secondary coursework and support to meet their high school credit accrual needs while they are in Montana.

**Strategy 3.2**: Each summer beginning in 2016, the MEP funded sites will provide migrant students with supplemental, research-based technology instruction to increase their engagement in school and prepare them for postsecondary, workforce, and career readiness.

**Strategy 3.3**: Each year beginning in 2016-17, provide opportunities for leadership development for migrant middle and high school students.

Following is the MPO and Strategy for Goal Area 4: School Readiness

**MPO 4.1**: In 2016-17 and each year thereafter, migrant preschool children receiving school readiness instruction will improve their skills by at least 5% as measured by the Montana MEP Preschool Outcomes Checklist.

**Strategy 4.1**: Each year beginning in 2016-17, local projects will provide preschool children with school readiness instruction when no other program is available to provide these services (i.e., during the summer months). Referrals will be made for migrant children to existing preschool programs.

g. Description of how the SEA will ensure there is consultation with parents of migratory children, including parent advisory councils, at both the State and local level, in the planning and operation of Title I, Part C programs that span not less than one school year in duration, consistent with section 1304(c)(3) of the ESEA, as amended by ESSA:

Title I Part C supports parent involvement by enlisting parents to help their children do well in school. In order to receive MEP funds, a local project must implement programs, activities, and procedures that effectively involve migrant parents. As the first teachers of their children, parents know the needs of their children best and can provide insight into their children's strengths and challenges. As such, migrant parents can play a pivotal role in planning the educational programs in which their children participate. Involving migrant parents in planning the MEP also builds their capacity to assist in their children's learning at home. In addition, parent involvement in the planning of the program enables parents to understand the program and have informed conversations with MEP and school staff regarding their children's education. Through their participation in the planning process, migrant parents are also more likely to become advocates and supporters of the program because they have a personal stake in its success.

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) has structures and resources in place for involving and supporting parents and families. With the goal of ensuring that high quality services are provided to all communities and schools, OPI provides a link to parent resources on its website at <a href="http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/TitlePrgms/TItleIA/TItleIA.html#gpm1\_4">http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/TitlePrgms/TItleIA/TItleIA.html#gpm1\_4</a>. The Family and Community Engagement (FACE) site offers links to resources and programs (i.e., the Montana PTA). Parents can print out useful information and search electronic links related to curriculum, tests and assessment results, nutrition, and health, and involvement in school improvement.

Montana offers general and specific information for parents to learn about the MEP, and to understand the ID&R process to determine whether their familouy qualifies for the program. Further, the Montana MEP offers ideas for parents to help their children experience success in school. Each local MEP sponsors parent development, family events for sharing information and resources, and culminating activities to which parents are invited to participate and bring their families. The Montana MEP and local projects consult with the parent advisory councils (PACs) about CNA and the design of the comprehensive SDP through the participation of parents on the Montana MEP CNA and SDP committees. These individuals, in turn, report back to their local PACs.

While Montana has a State PAC in place through Title I, Part A to which migrant parents are invited, migrant parents often are hesitant to travel long distances to attend a statewide meeting. As a result, local PACs are in place to allow parents to have input on key issues affecting migrant education in Montana. There are two primary Migrant PACs that meet during the year — one group of parents that speak Spanish on one end of the State, and one group of parents that speak Hmong on the other end of the State. As a result, the Montana MEP coordinates these two groups so that they operate as one group, but meet separately. Efforts to provide a Skype meeting to accommodate the long distances and work schedules of parents have been and will continue to be made.

The Montana MEP PACs serves in an advisory capacity to the Director of Migrant Education. Their advice assists the Director in making decisions to improve the program. The PACs play a critical role in the effectiveness of the MEP, therefore, MEP staff provide and maintain a high quality professional development program as well as maintain the PACs as a credible and viable vehicle for MEP success. Local PACs are supported by the State MEP, but have autonomy to make decisions about parent involvement at the local and State levels. They should:

- Be comprised of a representative sample of parents or guardians of eligible migrant children and individuals who represent the interests of such parents;
- Meet once per month during the regular school year;
- Be provided by local projects with a meeting location (with the assistance of the local projects, the PACs plan the time, and agenda well in advance);
- Schedule meetings convenient for parents to accommodate their work schedules;
- Provide meeting agendas, minutes, and other materials in a language and format that parents understand; and
- Establish meeting rules that support open discussion.

Local MEPs may use MEP funds to provide transportation, childcare, or other reasonable and necessary costs to facilitate attendance. The local MEPs retain copies of attendance

records, meeting agendas, minutes, and any other relevant materials for auditing purposes by the Montana MEP.

Given the basic summer services model employed by the State of Montana with a smaller year-round component, to meet the needs of mobile migrant parents in Montana, each local MEP has a parent component built into the project such that during the summer, parents are visited in their homes or places of employment by MEP staff to determine needs and ensure that their voices are heard. Staff funded by the State MEP serve as home/school liaisons and help arrange transportation to allow parents to attend school functions, child care during parent meetings, and individual or group tutoring for parents in ESL or topics such as family literacy, health/nutrition, or the importance of helping their children graduate.

- h. Describe the SEA's processes and procedures for ensuring that migratory children who meet the statutory definition of "priority for services" are given priority for Title I, Part C services, including:
  - The specific measures and sources of data used to determine whether a migratory child meets each priority for services criteria:

As part of the ESSA requirements for Title I, Part C, every State must describe how it determines which students meet the Priority for Services (PFS) definition; and every MEP in every State is required to maintain a list of eligible migrant students as well as a list of the students designated as PFS. In addition to these lists, reasons for the decision to designate a student as PFS must remain on file with the student records at each migrant program site. Determining which migrant students receive PFS is put into place through the SDP as part of the State activity in which Montana sets its performance goals, targets, and benchmarks to ensure the appropriate delivery of migrant student services. Data on Mobility and Performance on State Assessments comprise each section of the Title I Part C application process for subgrantees.

The State of Montana receives MEP funds from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Migrant Education, to carry out the Federal Title I, Part C law which requires that priority must be given to students who are failing, or most at risk of failing to meet State academic content standards and student achievement standards <a href="mailto:and">and</a> whose education has been interrupted during the performance period. The NAC reviewed the current State definition of how students fit into these categories and made adjustments for greater clarity and to align to State measures of academic content standards. The PFS formula for Montana is specified below.

Montana MEP Priority for Services (PFS) Levels			
Priority Level	Description	Priority Level Value	
1	High School student with disruption of education and at least one other risk factor	5	
2	Elementary student with disruption of education and at least one other risk factor	4	
3	Student with QAD within the current year and at least one other risk factor	3	
4	Student with QAD within the last 2 years and at least one other risk factor	2	
5	Student with QAD within the last 3 years and at least one other risk factor	1	

Because students may have multiple risk factors that could affect achievement, the MT MEP assigns a risk value to each factor collected. A higher value means the student has more numerous and severe factors that adversely affect school achievement. Risk factor values are averaged across each site and the state to come up with a risk factor rating. Comparing a site risk factor rating to the state risk factor rating allows the State Director to determine which sites have greater needs compared to the State as a whole.

Risk Factor	Risk Factor Value	
Priority	1=5 points; 2=4 points; 3=3 points;	
	4=2 points; 5=1 point	
Qualifying Move	A determining factor of priority	
	level, no individual points are	
	assigned.	
Move in Performance Period	A determining factor of priority	
	level, no individual points are	
	assigned.	
Disruption of education	A determining factor of priority	
	level, no individual points are	
	assigned.	
LEP/ELL	Yes=2 points; No=0 points	
Special Education	Yes=2 points; No=0 points	
Proficiency on standardized	Below proficient=4; Proficient=0	
assessments		
Oral Proficiency Level	1-2=4 points; 3=2 points; 4-5=0	
	points	
Instructional Level Summer	4+ grades below=4; 3 grades	
Success Math	below=3; 2 grades below=2;	
	1 grade below=1	
SMART Pre/Posttest scores	Non proficient =4points	

Summer Success Pre/Post-	Non proficient =4points
Test Reading	
Instructional Level Summer	4+ grades below=4; 3 grades
Success Reading	below=3; 2 grades below=2;
	1 grade below=1
Retention/Overage for	2+ grades below=4; 1 grade
Grade/	below=2; Appropriate=0
Behind in credit accrual	

- The delegation of responsibilities for documenting priority for services determinations and the provision of services to migratory children determined to be priority for services:
  - State MEP staff, local migrant directors, contractors, and others with expertise in the design, operation, and evaluation of MEPs provide technical assistance to MTMEP staff to help them most efficiently determine the students who are PFS. Montana makes the decision about how MEP services are delivered by assigning the first priority for services to students who have been determined to have the greatest needs and who are greatest risk of school failure by using the risk factor method of prioritization. Various sources of data are used to make these determinations using NGS, AIM, and MSIX, surveys, evaluation results and teacher observations. All PFS determinations are made as soon as possible and usually within ten days of eligibility verification and subject to the availability of data in all relevant systems.
- The timeline for making priority for services determinations, and communicating such information to title I, part C service providers:

All relevant PFS data is collected as part of the ID and R process utilizing data from sending states, previously attended schools, MSIX, and is mined from the CNA process as quickly as the data is made available to the MTMEP. PFS determinations must be made within ten days of enrollment and data analysis and is part of the subgranting application approval system at the SEA.

#### C. Title III, A:

#### **Entrance and Exit Procedures for English Learners**

Montana has created standardized statewide entrance procedures for the accurate and timely identification of English learners (ELs). The process begins with every enrolling student's parent or guardian filling out a home language survey in order to gather data on languages spoken in the home or in the student's life. The home language survey establishes eligibility for the student to be screened on the WIDA W-APT Language screener. The W-APT screener assesses students in all four domains of language (speaking, listening, reading and writing). If a student's scores fall below the English language proficiency criteria, it is determined that they are an English learner and qualify for EL services. This process will take place and EL identification status will be completed by an LEA within 30 days of enrollment to the school. To ensure this occurs, there will be an assurance in the E-grant application for ESEA funds.

Based on experience, Montana has created a second entry point for eligibility of ELs through a Teacher Observation Checklist. This checklist allows classroom teachers the opportunity to observe a student's language and determine if that student should be screened on the language screener based on a language other than English. Once it is established that a language other than English may be impacting the student, they are given the WIDA W-APT screener to determine EL status.

Montana has developed English language proficiency criteria for ALL ELs to determine when an EL no longer requires EL services. An EL must obtain a 5.0 or better score on the overall composite score on the WIDA ACCESS 2.0 or WIDA ACCESS Kindergarten assessment. The student must also obtain a 4.0 or better score on both the reading and writing subtests in order to be considered eligible for exiting EL status. Once a student has obtained these scores, schools will develop a plan to review the EL data and make a determination if they are performing at grade level expectations in English and are able to fully participate in society. If these criteria are met, then the student is eligible to exit EL status.

#### **Outreach of New Procedures**

In order for The OPI to communicate the new standardized entrance and exit procedures, The OPI will provide guidance on The OPI website, face-to-face trainings, Teacher Hub Online Classes, technical assistance, regional trainings and connections with Title I conferences and training. Throughout the outreach process, The OPI will collaborate with the Title I Committee of Practitioners and EL Focus Groups regarding the implementation of the new procedures and continually develop appropriate and meaningful outreach. In addition to those collaborations, Title monitoring of schools will also provide evidence of implantation of the new procedures for all schools.

In addition to the exit and entrance procedures outreach, the OPI will continue to increase the amount of online Teacher Hub Courses for teachers, principals and other school leaders around best instructional practices for ELs. Based on stakeholder feedback and evidence, the OPI will continue to coordinate and deliver sustainable, job-embedded, and targeted professional development in order to increase the effectiveness of school systems in creating Language Instruction Education Programs for ELs.

**D. Title V, B** Subpart 2 – Measurable program objectives and outcomes for rural and low-income schools: The Office of Public Instruction will approve and monitor the Rural and Low-Income School grants to ensure that 100% of the grants implement activities allowed under the applicable title programs by spring 2018.

# E. McKinney-Vento Homeless Children -

Describe the procedures the SEA will use to identify homeless children and youths in the State and assess their needs.

The OPI views the Homeless Education Program as a framework for supporting homeless students across the state. Due to the rural and frontier nature of many LEAs, it can be a

daunting challenge to resource poor communities to create a robust "program." The OPI encourages all communities to view Homeless Education through the lens of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support. By creating a systematic and systemic approach to meeting the needs of all students, homeless students will be able to access interventions designed to increase their academic success and positively impact their social and emotional well-being.

LEAs are encouraged to identify homeless children and youths in an effort to better understand the challenges of all students within their schools. Accurate identification of homeless students allows LEAs to work with community partners to provide supports and resources. The State Coordinator encourages LEAs to apply for a wide variety of grants and funding sources designed to meet the needs of homeless and other underserved children and youths. By combining the identification of homeless students with data provided by the Early Warning System LEAs are further able to utilize research based interventions designed to mitigate the challenges faced by these students.

The OPI will rely on LEAs to reach out to homeless families and youths to identify, serve, and enroll such children and youths in public schools, or to refer them to local Head Start, Tribal Head Start, or other educational programs where appropriate. All homeless children and youths enrolled in a public school in Montana will be identified in the Achievement in Montana (AIM) database, including the student's living situation at the time of identification as homeless. Children and youths who are unaccompanied shall also be marked as such in the AIM system. The OPI's Education of Homeless Children and Youths program, in conjunction with the National Center for Homeless Education, shall provide training, technical assistance, and written guidance to all LEAs regarding the need to identify and provide services to such children and youths. Upon enrollment, all LEAs shall be encouraged to assess the needs of each homeless child or youth. LEAs applying for or receiving sub-grants shall conduct community wide assessments to determine the needs of all homeless families, children, and youths residing in the geographic area served by the sub-grant. Through regular communication with liaisons the State Coordinator shall assess the needs of homeless children and youths across the state, recognizing that such children and youths unique needs may be reflected in the abundance or lack of resources present in each community.

The State Coordinator shall collaborate and coordinate with the Montana PRIDE Foundation and other local, state, and national agencies and organizations providing support to LGBTQ children and youths to insure that that they have access to supports and services tailored to the unique needs of this population. The State Coordinator shall work with such agencies and organizations to focus on LGBTQ youth who are unaccompanied, a group that is particularly at risk for abuse, violence, and child sex trafficking.

The State Coordinator shall work with the Indian Education division and with Tribal Governments across the state to create culturally appropriate programs that meet the needs of both rural and urban Indian populations. The State Coordinator will provide focused technical assistance and training to schools located on or near reservations with high populations of American Indian students to insure that homeless students within these schools are appropriately identified and provided with services. Along with these efforts the OPI will continue to refocus grant funding efforts on reservation communities, recognizing that these communities have high proportions of child homelessness and minimal access to community level supports due to the rural and low-income nature of these communities.

Describe the SEA's programs for school personnel (including liaisons designated under section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Act, principals and other school leaders, attendance officers, teachers, enrollment personnel, and specialized instructional support personnel) to heighten the awareness of such school personnel of the specific needs of homeless children and youths, including such children and youths who are runaway and homeless youths.

The OPI shall develop written materials, which shall be posted on the OPI's Homeless Education webpage, to assist LEAs in creating programs to address the unique needs of homeless children and youths in Montana. Materials shall include culturally responsive programming for American Indian children and youths which takes into account the many cultures and peoples located in Montana.

- A) The OPI shall develop online professional development opportunities for all school personnel regarding the specific needs of homeless children and youths, including the unique needs of American Indian children and youths, and LGBTQ youths.
- B) The OPI shall provide in person trainings at a variety of state-wide conferences. Such trainings shall include a minimum of seven hours of relevant workshops to be offered at the State Title I Conference on an annual basis, workshops at other state level conferences upon request, regional trainings through the CSPDs or RESAs, and district level trainings as requested.
- C) The OPI shall provide technical assistance via email, phone call, or in person at the request of LEA personnel.
- D) The State Coordinator shall provide trainings to educators and school personnel at the request of Tribal Education Agencies or upon request to schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Education which serve students transferring into our out of public schools.
- E) The State Coordinator will provide trainings and technical assistance to other agencies and organizations providing services to homeless children and families.

Describe the SEA's procedures to ensure that disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youths are promptly resolved.

All LEAs are required to adopt a policy and procedure for resolving disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youths. Such policies and procedures may be the

same process used to address other disputes or grievances within the district. The OPI provides documents to all LEAs to assist them in informing homeless families and youths of their right to file a dispute. These documents are available on the OPI website and are also available to all LEAs in the state through TransACT.com, under a contract with the OPI. Parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youths may file a dispute with the OPI based on the following process.

Process for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless students

#### (A) Notice by Local Education Agency (LEA)

Every school district or LEA must have a dispute resolution policy specifically addressing the rights of homeless students to appeal placement decisions. A written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the right to appeal, must be provided if the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disputes the school's decision. The written explanation must be complete, contain contact information for the LEA homeless liaison and SEA coordinator, the procedure for appeal, and in a language the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand.

#### (B) LEA Homeless Liaison

In any dispute regarding enrollment or placement of a homeless youth, the school must refer the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth to the LEA's homeless liaison to assist in carrying out the dispute resolution as quickly as possible. The homeless liaison is responsible for ensuring that the dispute resolution process is followed for an unaccompanied youth.

#### (C) LEA Decision

The LEA homeless liaison is encouraged to work with the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) Education of Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program Coordinator as appropriate to resolve the dispute. If the dispute cannot be resolved at the local district level, the liaison shall appeal the matter to the OPI. The student must remain enrolled until resolution of the dispute.

#### (D) SEA Education of Homeless Children and Youth Coordinator

Upon receipt of a completed dispute resolution form and related documentation, the State EHCY Coordinator shall, within 15 business days, convene a panel of three OPI staff to investigate and resolve the dispute. The decisions of the panel will be final. The OPI will issue a written decision to the LEA, and the parent/youth. A Dispute Resolution Form is available for download on the OPI website for use during the dispute resolution process. Copies of the dispute resolution procedure and forms are available for school district liaisons to give to families, staff, and service providers.

Note: If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the child/student must immediately be admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought pending final resolution of the dispute. Admission includes transportation and other school services and activities.

Describe the SEA's procedures to ensure that youths described in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Act and youths separated from the public school are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services, including by identifying and removing barriers that prevent youths described in this paragraph from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies.

The State Coordinator shall work with the Montana School Counseling Association (MSCA) to increase awareness among school counselors of the need to assist homeless youths in receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework. The State Coordinator shall also work with the MSCA to provide all school counselors in the state with training regarding the need to assist all homeless students in preparing for college or careers.

The State Coordinator will work with the Montana Digital Academy to provide credit recovery and full and partial credit accrual options for homeless youths enrolled in high school.

Describe the SEA's procedures to ensure that homeless children and youths:

- a) Have access to public preschool programs, administered by the SEA or by LEA, as provided to other children in the State;
- b) Who meet the relevant eligibility criteria, do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities under; and
- c) Who meet the relevant eligibility criteria, are able to participate in Federal, State, and local nutrition programs.
  - The SEA State Coordinator serves on Montana's Best Beginnings Advisory Council and provides input to member agencies regarding the need to provide services to homeless preschool children. The State Coordinator also works with the Head Start Collaboration Coordinator to insure that homeless children are prioritized for services within Head Start and Tribal Head Start Programs. Homeless children represent nearly 10% of all children served in Montana Head Start Programs. The State Coordinator also collaborates with the Montana Preschool Development Grant (MPDG) to prioritize services to homeless children in communities funded by the grant. Upon request the State Coordinator also provides training and technical assistance to Head Start and MPDG programs.
  - 2) The State Coordinator communicates with the Montana High School Association (MHSA) to insure that homeless students are granted waivers to eligibility requirements based on residency. The MHSA will provide trainings to homeless liaisons and will jointly publish guidance for liaisons assisting homeless students in applying for waivers to the

eligibility requirements. The State Coordinator also works with state and local programs that provide extracurricular activities to homeless children and youths, including the YMCA, United Way, and other programs. The State Coordinator collaborates with the Career and Technical Education Division to insure access to CTE activities including FFA, FCCLA, HOSA, ProStart, and other similar career based programs. The State Coordinator encourages LEAs to provide opportunities for homeless students to enroll in Advanced Placement Courses, International Baccalaureate Programs, Dual Enrollment Programs, Gifted and Talented Programs, and other academic programs. LEAs are encouraged to assist homeless students in participating in Fine Arts programs. Through collaborative efforts with non-profits such as My Student in Need, LEAs are encouraged to reach out to the local community to provide items needed for participation in extra-curricular activities, including athletic gear, musical instruments, and other tools or equipment as necessary.

3) The State Coordinator collaborates with the School Nutrition Division of the OPI to provide guidance to all districts on providing immediate access to free school meals to all homeless students. The OPI collaborates with Montana No Kid Hungry to encourage LEAs to provide alternative breakfast programs, such as Breakfast in the Classroom and Breakfast After the Bell, in schools and communities with high numbers of homeless and low-income students. Through the Title I Program the Homeless Coordinator encourages all eligible schools to participate in the Community Eligibility Program, which assists all students, both homeless and at-risk of homelessness, in accessing free school meals. The State Coordinator also encourages all LEAs to collaborate and coordinate efforts with the Montana Food Bank Network and with local food pantries to provide food pantries in school buildings, and to provide Backpack Food Programs to homeless and low-income elementary school students.

Describe the SEA's strategies to address problems with respect to the education of homeless children and youths, including problems resulting from enrollment delays and retention, consistent with section 722(g)(1)(H) and (I) of the McKinney-Vento Act.

The OPI requires liaisons in all LEAs participating in the sub-grant program to participate in at least seven (7) hours of professional development addressing the needs of homeless children and youths on a yearly basis. The State Coordinator provides trainings on topics related to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youths on a yearly basis. Liaisons in all other LEAs shall be required to obtain a minimum of three (3) hours of

professional development addressing the needs of homeless children and youths on a yearly basis. All professional development may be obtained through webinars offered by the federal technical assistance provider, through the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youths, through the State Coordinator, or through other recognized experts in the field of child and youth homelessness.

The OPI shall provide written guidance documents regarding the needs to enroll and retain homeless children and youths, including the unique needs of American Indian homeless students, LGBT homeless students, pregnant and parenting homeless students, and other categories as appropriate. Such guidance shall be posted on the OPI's Homeless Education page.

The State Coordinator shall collaborate and coordinate with other divisions with the OPI which provide specific supports, such as Migrant Education, Indian Education, Special Education, Gifted and Talented Education, Preschool Programs, Career and Technical Education, and other programs and initiatives relevant to the needs of homeless children and youths.

The State Coordinator shall collaborate and coordinate with the Montana Behavioral Initiative, the Montana SOARS (Project AWARE) Program, the School Climate Transformation Grant, the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Initiative, and other initiatives and grant funded programs aimed at creating awareness of and positive supports for homeless children and youths.

# **Performance Management Processes**

### Description of system of Performance Management

The OPI manages its implementation and oversight of state and federal grants and requirements through a variety of mechanisms that have increasingly become more automated, online, and electronic for ease of use by school districts and to ensure greater accuracy. The details of these approaches and mechanisms are described below with regard to each of the topical sections of this plan as applicable:

- Academic Standards and Assessments
- Accountability, Support, and Improvement for Schools
- Supporting Excellent Educators
- Supporting All Students

#### Review and approval process for school district applications and plans:

The OPI uses its E-Grants System for review and approval of LEA applications and plans, supplemented by the Comprehensive Improvement Plan (CIP) system (formerly known as the Continuous School Improvement Plan or CSIP). Based on recommendations from our stakeholders, this plan is scheduled for major revisions to make it a more unified and aligned system for all programs and requirements, including the four topical areas of Montana's ESSA state plan. Final program reports (where required by a program) and final fiscal reports as well as cash requests with accompanying descriptive information on expected expenditures are also within the E-Grants system.

## Collection and use of data:

Student and program participation data is collected through our AIM (Achievement in Montana) system. In addition, the TEAMS (Terms of Employment, Accreditation, and Master Schedule) system is used to collect school district staffing and course offering data. Special Education data is collected through the Special Education Child Count Data Verification system.

# Monitoring implementation:

A variety of monitoring methods are used by OPI to ensure statutory and regulatory requirements. They include:

- Annual and quarterly desk audits
- Site visits for high-need and randomly selected schools
- American Indian School Advocacy Teams
- Special Education on-site and desk monitoring
- Accreditation reports and intensive assistance visits
- Title I portfolio monitoring

# Assuring continuous improvement:

The OPI will regularly collect, review, and provide feedback on district and school Comprehensive Improvement Plans (CIP) which will contain a consolidated improvement plan for comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools, special education, Perkins, and state Accreditation improvement plan requirements.

# <u>Technical assistance and differentiation of schools in most need:</u>

The OPI will deliver technical assistance statewide through annual program conferences and work sessions to address areas where LEAs and schools are experiencing difficulty in achieving program outcomes. We will also use regional delivery of professional development with coordination between Title programs and state programs or initiatives through the use of trained experts in the particular field across Montana. School self-assessments aligned to specific needs will be key tools in our approach to assisting districts and schools. OPI will use the statewide system of support to ensure technical assistance, resources, and services are delivered strategically and comprehensively to targeted high-need schools.

